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MEMOIRS

AND

SELECT REMAINS

OF

AN ONLY SON.

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B. Bensley, Bolt-court, Fleet-street.

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MEMOIRS

AND

SELECT REMAINS

OF

AN ONLY SON,

WHO DIED NOVEMBER 27, 1821,

IN HIS NINETEENTH YEAR,

WHILE A STUDENT IN THE UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW.

By THOMAS DURANT,
POOLE, DORSET.

Οἷαν δὲ τρέφει ἔρνος ἀνὴρ ἐριθηλὲς ἐλαίης
Χέρσῳ ἐν οἰοπόλῳ, δθ' ἅλις ἀναβέβρυχεν ὕδωρ,
Καλὸν, τηλεθάον, τὸ δέ τε πνοιαὶ δονέουσι
Παντοίων ἀνέμων, καὶ τε βρύει ἄνθεϊ λευκῷ·
Ἐλθὼν δ' ἐξαπίνης ἄνεμος, σὺν λαίλαπι πολλῇ,
Βόθρου τ' ἐξέρυψε καὶ ἐξεδύνασ' ἐπι γαίῃ.—Il. xvii. 53.

VOL. I.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

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AND CHALMERS & COLLINS, GLASGOW.

1822.

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PREFACE

TO THE FIRST EDITION.

The writer of the following Memoir has too much confidence in the kindness of the public, to deem it necessary for him to *deprecate* the severity of its criticism, or to *entreat* its favourable verdict on his labours. He is not unaware, that the partiality of a father for an only child—lately the last earthly solace to which he could look, on the loss of all the other members of his family—may have led him to dwell on scenes, which, however dear to his own heart, from those numerous and powerful associations, of which he alone is conscious, may present but little to interest the feelings of others.

If he has over-rated the talents and attainments of his beloved child, he has erred in common with some whose names stand high in more than one department of literature and science.* He certainly felt no inconsiderable diffidence in offering to the notice of the public a life of his son, till he found that many, who had no parental partialities, and who were, in every other respect, more competent judges than himself, had formed as high an estimate of those talents as he entertained; and

* See the various testimonies of Dr. Wardlaw, and Professors Walker, Jardine, Mylne, and Meikleham, in different parts of the following Memoir.

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some of whom had expressed a wish that a work of this kind should be undertaken.

The writer may be suspected of partiality, especially in describing the moral and religious character of his son. It will, however, be admitted, that no other had such means of knowing that character; and he solemnly declares, that he is utterly unconscious of presenting one feature more strongly than truth permitted, or even demanded. When he asserts—as he does most conscientiously—that he never, for the last fourteen years, endured one anxious feeling of apprehension respecting his child's future interests in time or eternity—that, from a perfect conviction of the purity and strength of his religious principles, his parents could ever repose on him the most unlimited confidence—the public will admit that, in whatever he has said, he is, at least, sincere. On this subject he dares to appeal, without hesitation, from his own testimony, to the united opinions of many—and especially of those numerous youths, both at home and at College, with whom his son was most intimately acquainted; and to whom he necessarily appeared, in his hours of relaxation, without even the possible suspicion of disguise. If TRUTH be PANEGYRIC, the eulogium must stand: and the writer can never sufficiently praise God that, in this case, a eulogium can be fairly pronounced; and that, amidst recollections which awaken all the tenderest and most painful emotions of his heart, he has not to look back on ONE act of disobedience, or ONE moral delinquency of his son. That son was, unquestionably, conscious of his own imperfections before God; and sought, through the mediation of a Saviour, the pardon of his sins; but, in all that was visible to man, there was the evident operation of

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that sacred principle, which taught him "to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world."*

The writer has found it difficult to satisfy himself in making a selection from Essays and Poems, which would, altogether, fill several volumes, and which afford striking evidences of industry, if not of taste and judgment. Three Prize Essays—each of which, it is believed, would nearly equal in size the present volume—are wholly or partially excluded,†—because too large for insertion,—generally too consecutive to admit of partial extracts,—and too compressed to be capable of a good abridgment. In making the selection, he has done his best. That he has not chosen the worst portion of his son's writings, will be readily believed: but, as he could only make a *selection*, he can confidently assert, that there are among the unpublished pieces several quite equal to those contained in these volumes, and one‡ superior to any among them.

The author has to make for himself an apology which, under any other circumstances than those in which he has been placed, would be totally inadmissible. And it will require all the kindness of the public to admit it even here. His apology is, *that he has written hastily, and amidst numerous other engagements*, many of which have been painful ones—rendered unavoidable, however, either by the duties of his station, or by the claims of friendship.

'But why write in so hurried a manner?'—The truth is, that having once determined on the memoir, he could not, without a violent effort, direct his

* Titus ii. 12. † The first and last chapters of an "Essay on Tribunitial Power," are given.

‡ An "Essay on the Standard of Taste."

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attention to those other employments from which he could not, in conscience, wholly shrink—and he felt that till he had accomplished this painfully pleasing task, he could not give to those official labours, in which his heart delighted, that undivided attention which he believes to be due to them. Besides this, he knew that, however imperfectly qualified, either by natural or acquired endowments, for the task of a biographer, he was the only person living who could give a history of his son's mind:—he thought that the history, together with specimens of his productions, might be serviceable to some parents and to many young persons:—and, from the experience of the last eighteen months, which had swept off, in rapid succession, seven of his relations and many of his best friends, he felt that it was dangerous to calculate on protracted life; and that what his "hand found to do, it should do with all its might." This last consideration—amidst the awful solitude of his once cheerful abode—has given to the others a force perfectly irresistible.

Whether this statement may, or may not be admitted as an apology, for the imperfections of the following work, it is confidently hoped, that criticism will spare the feelings of a disconsolate father, who has nothing left of a family he ardently loved, but the fond remembrance of warm attachments and christian virtues, which, amidst many sighs and tears, he has honestly, however inadequately, attempted to display.

Poole, March, 1822.

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PREFACE

TO THE SECOND EDITION.

The author feels, that, on publishing a second edition, some expression of gratitude is due to the conductors of several periodical works, for the promptness with which they have noticed the following Memoir, and for the kind manner in which they have spoken both of his lamented son and of himself. He thanks them for their suggestions also; to some of which he has, it may be perceived, paid attention.

Most of the Reviewers have spoken, in highly eulogistic terms, of his dear child's Essays; and some have expressed a wish to see, at least, another volume of his productions. The biographer had in view, when composing the work,—to present an eminent intellectual and christian character in a youth—with specimens, sufficient to justify the terms in which he had described it,—together with an account of the early education, and of the principles under which the character was formed. That design has, he thinks, been completed. He dreaded from the commencement, and he still dreads, the thought of throwing before the public a mass of juvenile essays; which must, after all, derive their chief interest from the circumstance of being the productions of an extraordinary *boy*.

The very kindness of the public, in so readily purchasing the former edition, and in calling for still more copies, supplies him with a stronger in-

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ducement to pause, before he complies with the friendly suggestions of his critical advisers. He is afraid lest he should subject himself, among those who do not know him, to the charge of taking advantage of the public sympathy—to thrust upon the world productions of an inferior character, and as little honorable to the memory of his son, as to his own discrimination and prudence. It would, however, be injustice to the writers who have thought so favourably of his beloved child's talents, did he not acknowledge that he has seriously considered the subject; and it would be as unjust to himself did he not add, that he cannot *go before general* opinion. He is willing to *follow* it: and should the public give indications of a wish for more, he may, at some future time, should the Almighty prolong his life, publish the Essay *On the advantages of Classical Literature;* that *On the Standard of Taste;* and a few more of *those which were delivered in the Moral Philosophy Class.*

There are other suggestions of private friends to which he has given considerable attention. If he has not yet complied with their wishes, the cause has been, that a new edition was instantly and urgently called for; while the claims on his attention and services by two or three religious institutions, either took him from home, or so occupied him there, that to undertake any considerable work was utterly impracticable.

Poole, September 1822.

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MEMOIRS,

&c.

My beloved child, William Friend, so named from his maternal grandfather, was born January 7th, 1803.* It was no sooner announced to me that "a man child was born into the world," than I most solemnly dedicated him to his Maker; and from that day to the dreadful moment in which I heard he was gone beyond the reach, or the need of prayer,

* The author deems it necessary to inform his *youthful* readers, that a few of the commencing pages refer to the treatment of his child almost in the very nursery. They will perceive, in the progress of the work, his reasons for paying so much attention to the earlier stages of his history. But if they find this part uninteresting, they may, without impropriety, proceed at once to the account of his moral and religious, or to that of his intellectual, education; the exact places of which are indicated in the Table of Contents.

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I never once, to the best of my recollection, offered my supplications to God in private, without distinctly remembering and mentioning him. Since his removal, it has been one of my bitterest griefs, that neither he nor those with whom he had a common and an equal interest in my affections, remain to form an object of solicitude in such hallowed employments. The sincerity with which I so often made that dedication, has now been put to a severe test; and, though not without "strong crying and tears," I have been enabled, through the grace of HIM who smote me, to say, "The LORD gave and the LORD taketh away, and *blessed be the name of the* LORD." The celebrated John Howe, in addressing Sir Charles and Lady Hoghton,* on an occasion similar to that which has agonized my heart, says, "You concurred in this the dedication of your son—you covenanted with God in Christ to be his God. But then you

* Dedication to his "Redeemer's Dominion over the invisible World," a Sermon of almost unequalled vigor, beauty and pathos, preached nearly a century and half ago

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ought to consider what the import and meaning was of that your covenant. Was it not absolute and without limitation, that God should be a God to him entirely, and without reserve? and that he should be *his*, absolutely, and be disposed of by him, *at his pleasure?* Otherwise, there was a repugnancy and contradiction *in the very terms* of your covenant. Is not *God*, the name of a being incapable of limitation?—And when he makes *his demand from us* of what we, on our part, are to be and do; he demands *our all*, absolutely; that we surrender *ourselves* and *ours*, whatsoever we are and have, to his pleasure and dispose, without other exception or restriction, than *by his promise*, he hath laid upon himself."

I felt most deeply the importance of the charge which Providence had devolved upon me. Not utterly a stranger to the state of human nature, to the waywardness of the heart, to the dangers which beset every part of the path of life; I trembled, lest, through a defect in his education, through any impropriety in our example, or through some foreign

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influence, he might become an injury to the world, a dishonor to his God:—and looking upon him, I uttered the language of another father, similarly circumstanced:—

"Now thou art listed in the war of life,
"The prize immense, and oh! severe the strife!
"Thou embryo-angel, or thou infant fiend,
"A being now begun, but ne'er to end,
"What boding fears a father's heart torment,
"Trembling and anxious for the grand event,
"Lest thy young soul, so late by Heaven bestowed,
"Forget her father, and forget her God!
"Lest, while imprison'd in this house of clay,
"To tyrant lusts she fall a helpless prey!
"And lest, descending still from bad to worse,
"Her immortality should prove her curse!

"Maker of souls! avert so dire a doom,
"Or snatch her back to native Nothing's gloom!"

DAVIS.

These apprehensions of possible evil did not destroy the pleasure which our lovely boy produced. We called to remembrance the promises of God to the faithful; the assistances

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which he had afforded many of our friends in training up their families; and the happy success which had crowned labors as humble as our own. They gave, however, a tone of deep and anxious feeling to our hearts, awakened within us the spirit of prayer, and roused us to the exercise of our judgments respecting the pleasing, but solemn duties assigned us. On many particular occasions did both his mother and myself jointly make *these* the special subjects of our petitions. Nor had we, in after life, neither have I to this moment, reason to doubt, that He, "who heareth prayer," approved and answered ours. Few can be ignorant that the *direct and immediate influence* produced by exercises of this kind on the mind is great and most salutary: they bind us, in common consistency, to *act* as we *pray*. Philosophy, which, on such subjects, only skims the surface, may maintain, that this is the *sole* effect; but that word, on which I have long rested my hopes, and which now affords, not merely my richest, but my only consolation, assures us, that, however immutable the plans of the "only wise God" may be,

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our prayers, when sincere and fervent, avail much in heaven.

Besides the abundant consolation which flowed to us from the word of truth, *I* found my burden most materially alleviated by a knowledge of the sound sense, cultivated understanding, affectionate heart and christian principle of his beloved mother; who possessed, in a high degree, almost every mental and moral excellency for which her son was afterwards so distinguished. I knew, from the experience of three years, that she was deficient in no single qualification of a "help meet" for me in the education of our common charge.

He passed through his earliest years, with no more than the ordinary share of infantile diseases; which sometimes alarmed us for a season, but never produced any lasting fears. We enjoyed him greatly; nor did either our tempers or our principles permit us to refuse the comfort with which Providence had supplied us in the health and sprightliness of our

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child: we were not disposed to dash the cup of happiness with the bitterly tormenting inquiry, 'How could we endure to lose him?' This disposition accompanied us through life: and, except in cases of real or apparent danger, neither his mother nor myself ever endured, on this ground, a moment's anxiety. *She*, in adverting to it, has often said, "The probability is, that he will survive us both; and why should we torment ourselves with the voluntary apprehension of an evil which may never arrive? God *may* take him from us; 'sufficient for the day will be the evil thereof;' and sufficient, unquestionably, will be our strength from above to bear it: but why should we not enjoy him while he lives, instead of embittering the present by the agonies of anticipation? It will be enough" —(Alas! *I* find it so!)—"it will be enough to endure his actual death, without enduring the dread of meeting the evil at every turn of his passage though life." Thus have been secured to me nineteen entire years of parental bliss—a larger share, I fear, than falls to the lot of

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many parents who possess their children for a much longer time.

"Happy the man, and happy he alone,
He who can call to-day his own,
He who, secure within, can say,
To-morrow do thy worst, for I have lived to-day." DRYDEN.

We deemed it imperiously necessary to form, while he was yet in his infancy, a plan of future management, to begin from the moment that he should emerge from that state. It was, I imagine, little, if any thing, more than that of all considerate parents; and if more than ordinarily successful in the application, it arose from the circumstance that while we had to operate upon the most favorable materials, THE PLAN WAS INVARIABLY PURSUED: I say, *invariably*, for I am not aware that it was ever, in a single instance, essentially neglected.

We had determined, from the beginning, TO

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ACT IN PERFECT UNISON—and if there should, at any time, occur an unavoidable difference in opinion, never to let him perceive it. If I had, as was sometimes probably the case, been unreasonable in demanding more than was to be fairly expected, or in insisting on what was, in his circumstances, impracticable, his mother was uniformly silent before him, and shewed me, when alone, the extravagance of my requisitions—thus affording *me* an opportunity of averting or correcting any evil that might have been threatened or produced—without begetting in his mind a notion that he might calculate on a rivalship betwixt the sternness of a father, and the excessive indulgence of a mother. He ever considered us as one—expected an equal share of tender affection from both—and was not, I trust, wholly disappointed.

We never employed the ordinary and vulgar method of FRIGHTENING him into obedience. Nothing but ignorance and weakness will resort to expedients, which produce in many, and even in some powerful, minds,

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distressing associations which no future instructions or reasonings can totally dissolve; and which are, not unfrequently, the foundation of mental habits, which destroy the entire comfort of future life, lead to a madhouse, or terminate in suicide. Never to the moment of his entrance upon the unseen world, did he know the torment of a superstitious apprehension.

It was an essential part of our plan NEVER EITHER TO DECEIVE HIM, or to suffer him to be deceived. We carried this into every thing. One deception discovered by a child—(and children are adepts at making such discoveries)—will ever shake that perfect confidence on which a parent has to calculate as the main assistant in a *moral* education. On this we rested a large share of our hope, and it never disappointed us. When about two years of age, he was afflicted with an inflammation of the lungs, which rendered respiration difficult. Incapable of transferring so precious a charge to other hands, we sat up with him, watched, wept and prayed over

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him, as he lay dozing or restless. It was necessary he should take medicine. This he refused, saying, "I can't, papa, it makes me sick." I answered, "My dear, *it will make you sick;* I know it is unpleasant; but it must be taken. You will be the better for it afterwards." This reasoning making, as may be imagined, little impression, in opposition to his *feelings*, I deemed it necessary to add, in a tone perfectly understood, "Unpleasant as it is, you *must* and *shall* take it." As he never knew us promise or threaten in vain, the case was instantly decided: and he never, from that time, refused any draught, however nauseous. This saved us much future perplexity.

He was NEVER PERMITTED TO CARRY A POINT BY IMPORTUNITY. We strove early to establish in his mind a conviction of our superior wisdom, and of a disposition to do every thing, which, in our judgment, could make him happy. "Do you not think *we* know what is best for you?" 'Yes.' "Do you not know that we love you too well to keep

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from you any thing that would make you happy?" 'Yes.' "Well, then, why do you ask a second time for what we would have given you at once if it had been proper?" After some such short dialogues as this, it was almost needless to say more. He might, perhaps, a few times, have urged a request, with the hope of subduing us: but after giving him two or three practical proofs of its inefficacy, there never was occasion to speak twice. Why will any parents, to save themselves the pain of a momentary decision, encourage a practice which, when formed into a habit, is equally injurious to one party, and vexatious to the other! A child that can conquer, by cries or entreaty, once in twenty times, will be sure always to make the effort: for, however the chances may be against him, a mind intent on its object will convert the mere *possibility* of success into a sufficient *probability* to justify the perpetual attempt.

We were equally anxious NEVER TO BE CONQUERED BY HIS OBSTINACY. As he was to reign only in our affections, our will, when

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once announced, was the law of the house. In cases where his mind was capable of perceiving the *reasons* of a decision, we often assigned them: but anxious to convince him that there always were reasons, we demanded an entire acquiescence in our determination, whether he saw its reasonableness or not; assuring him, that he would himself, when older and wiser, see that we had done right. When about two years of age, the question was brought to a practical issue: he obstinately refused for two hours to comply with a demand from his mother to beg her pardon for an offence. She was inflexible; and at length, he modestly turned round, submissively fell on his knees at her feet, and, in the most penitential accents, said, "I beg your pardon, mamma, and will never be so naughty again." The consequence of this patient decision was permanent. I am confident, that from that moment to the hour of his death, he never meditated opposition to our will, nor said or did a thing of which he feared we might seriously disapprove. In the merest trifles, no less really than in the most momen-

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tous engagements of his life, he was ever studious of our happiness; and he felt that, in consulting this, he was securing his own.

These remarks may seem both trifling and unnecessary to those who have paid little or no attention to the philosophy of education; and who conceive it to consist only in the whipping and dicipline of a school and a college: nor, in truth, do I entertain much hope that they will derive any material benefit from such minuteness. If not already aware that on these trifling circumstances much of the future character depends, I can scarcely calculate on finding among them a sufficient share of discernment to perceive the force of arguments by which the actual importance of these seeming trifles can be demonstrated. I wish to present before the public a youth of no ordinary character, equally distinguished by the brilliancy of his mental powers, the sweetness of his temper, and the strength and steadiness of his christian principles:—and it is not unnatural that I should give in detail the particulars of that process of education,

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by which, under God, those powers were developed, and that entire character formed. The first five or six years generally determine that which constitutes the *individuality*—the *leading peculiarity*, of the man through life. And *he* must have been a careless observer, who has not perceived the permanence of early associations and early habits. Circumstances, in after life, may modify that peculiarity, but they will never be able wholly to destroy it. And even the power of divine grace, which may effect a total moral revolution; which may implant principles, that, after unfolding themselves here, shall receive their more complete development in another world; will leave it to the end of time almost untouched. It has become too intimately a part of the mental constitution to be annihilated by any thing short of that solemn event, which shall dissolve every earthly tie, and place us in a region of light and love, whose transforming influence shall leave no portion of the character unassimilated to the likeness of our God and Saviour. As the efficacy of even religious principles, in forming the character, is

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so materially affected by these previous associations and habits, it is of immense importance to the individual and to society that special attention should be paid to the minuter circumstances of early life. These remarks will, it is hoped, be deemed sufficient to justify the past, or any future, detail of particulars.

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THE most important light in which our dear child appeared to us was that of a MORAL AND IMMORTAL BEING. And while we earnestly prayed for the advancement of his highest interests in time and eternity, we knew that it were mockery to offer prayer, did we not employ all the means in our power to enlighten, impress, and guide him. We ever felt that an influence from heaven was necessary to render our labors effectual;—that He, "from whom cometh every good and perfect gift," must be the primary agent in this great work;—but that we had to hope for and calculate on that influence, only as we added our endeavors to our supplications. The Nile, fed by the rains of distant mountains, rolls majestically along in its course; rises above, and spreads over, the face of Egypt; giving to that land *all* its fertility:—yet a large portion of the effect depends upon the husbandmen, who

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wisely construct their reservoirs, and so preserve the precious fluid, that, after the recession of the stream, they may still conduct it to every part; and thus conduce to the production of that enchanting scene, which rises up to view, with a rapidity and loveliness which almost surpass the charm of a poetic fiction. This depends wholly on the Nile: yet it depends upon the inhabitants of Egypt, whether "the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose," or remain fruitless and unsightly as the neighbouring sands. In simple truth, it depends on the union of both. Were the river to refuse his supply, or the husbandmen to refuse to avail themselves of his assistance, there would appear neither the beauty nor the abundance for which that land has, at certain seasons, been celebrated. And the law, which runs through nature, is equally fixed in the dispensations of grace, "work, for it is God that works."

Our hearts were naturally formed to cheerfulness; and the religion of Jesus had always

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presented itself to our minds as inexpressibly lovely,—as "glad tidings of great joy." It was, therefore, equally from inclination and principle, that we determined, if possible, to present religion before him in her own charming and attractive form. He never saw gloom in us; and he soon learned that religion was at once the inspirer and the guardian of our happiness. A connection, of great importance to his future character and peace, was thus early formed in his mind between godliness and pleasure. And such was the effect of this happy association, that though I never knew a human being who took a more solemn view of the realities of eternity than he, I am persuaded he never once in his life contemplated religion without a feeling of calm delight. He knew it only as the guide of life, the support of the heart, and the cherisher of a hope full of immortality. He had never felt "the terrors of the Lord;" for he had never known himself a sinner but in the light of those holy scriptures which, at the very moment of shewing him his condition, presented that blest sacrifice on which he could confidently rest for

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everlasting life. But though he had never passed through those mental anxieties and depressions which are found to give a peculiarly thrilling interest to the doctrine of salvation by faith in the Redeemer; I have rarely found any one who more ardently loved that distinguishing truth; or who felt more dissatisfied with sermons in which it did not form a prominent feature.

We began very early to point out to him the PROOFS OF THE EXISTENCE OF A GOD. The steps of the argument were so easy, that he soon comprehended all the leading topics in Paley's Natural Theology—a work, which, it is needless to say, possesses for young minds all the interest of a novel, by the variety of facts it adduces, and the happy simplicity with which it applies them in proof of its point. I did not introduce him, till later in life, to Clarke's *a priori* reasoning on the same subject. And, indeed, he never relished that great writer's "Demonstration." We corresponded and conversed much on this subject, during the last year: but he always con-

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sidered the argument, *a posteriori*,* as the only popular, and almost the sole ground that can be taken, with effect, against an atheist. He seemed to think that what was *conclusive* in the Demonstration, though not founded on the method of induction, was, after all, only the *a posteriori* argument in another form: and that the rest, from our necessary ignorance of *Infinity*, was more fitted to *confound* than satisfactorily to *demonstrate*. He admired, however, the profoundness of Clarke; and was equally struck with astonishment at the acuteness of Butler—first, a student for the dissenting ministry, afterwards Bishop of Durham—who ranked, at the age of twenty-one, among that great writer's most powerful *correspondents*—for his objections were too much in the form of doubts and modest inquiries, to place him among his *opponents*.

At a period equally early, we made him acquainted with the LEADING EVIDENCES OF DIVINE REVELATION. To teach him these,—

* As managed by Derham, Paley, and most writers on this subject.

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consisting, as most of them did, of facts, which are as susceptible of historical proof as any other facts,—we found to be no difficult task. It was, however, our great object to shew him the proofs which the holy scriptures themselves contain of their own sacred origin. At about the age of nine, he was a tolerable master of all the leading arguments in Paley. In future life, he studied these evidences with fresh and uncommon attention; and as he was unusually acute in perceiving all that could be said for and against any subject; and as he shrunk from no difficulty, his own mind anticipated, fairly met, and, to his perfect satisfaction, completely conquered, almost every objection which the heads and hearts of men have brought, or can bring, against the truth. Armed in this panoply, and with a deep and experimental feeling of its importance, he pursued inquiry, till he left no single topic, connected with the subject, unexplored. In more advanced years, he found great advantage from Saurin, whose Sermons of twelve volumes he read in French; from Butler's Analogy, which he fairly studied; and from

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other works which afforded materials for the exercise of his vigorous understanding, as well as for the repose of his heart.

Another great object was, to lead him, as early as possible, into a general acquaintance with the VARIOUS CONTENTS of Divine Revelation; and especially to impress him with those primary truths—the fallen condition of man, which the scripture either uniformly assumes, or distinctly asserts—and the abundant grace which the gospel affords for his recovery from sin, and his final happiness. We were anxious to put him in possession of a *correct principle of interpretation*. And this principle so approved itself to his maturer understanding, that he ever held it inviolate. I used to say, "My dear, if God has spoken to man, and made an explicit declaration of his will, by persons whom he has inspired, our business is, to ask, Where is that communication to be found? This book claims the honor. If God be its author, he has doubtless attended it with proofs sufficient to convince an honest enquirer that it comes from him. Examine the validity

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of its claim.—Are you satisfied?—This I may assume. Now, then, there remains but one duty; and that is, to ascertain, by a fair application of the laws of criticism, what is its import?—In this you must rest." "If the New Testament," says Dr. Chalmers, "be a message from God, it behoves us to make an entire and unconditional surrender of our minds to all the duty and all the information which it sets before us.—Had no message come to us from the fountain head of truth, it were natural enough for every intelligent mind to take itself to its own speculations. But a message from God has come to us, bearing, on its front, every character of authenticity; and is it right now, that the question of our faith or of our duty should be committed to the capricious variations of this man's taste, or of that man's fancy?" '*Our* maxim! and *our* sentiment!' God has put an authoritative stop to all this! *He* has spoken, and the right or liberty of speculation no longer remains to us. The question is now, not, 'What *thinkest* thou?' In the days of Pagan antiquity, no other question could be

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put,—and the wretched delusions and idolatries of that period, let us see what kind of answer the human mind is capable of making, when left to its own guidance, and its own authority. But we call ourselves christians, and profess to receive the bible as the directory of our faith; and the question in which we are concerned is, 'What is written in the law? How *readest* thou? What saith the scripture?'*"

When more advanced in life—and after he had thought profoundly on this, as on most other subjects submitted to his attention,—he considered this principle of interpretation as so sacred, that rather than have violated it he would, if necessary to its maintenance, have admitted the monstrous doctrine of transubstantiation itself. He more than once reasoned thus:—"The doctrine of transubstantiation is unquestionably false. The language of our Lord,—'*Except ye eat my flesh and drink my blood—This is my body*'—is in per-

* Evidences and authority of the Christian Revelation.

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fect unison with many other passages as truly figurative, and equally as bold. Nor is there any such language, except as connected with this subject, which even Catholics themselves understand *literally*. It is, therefore, right, and even necessary, to interpret these texts on the same principle by which all others are interpreted. Either take *all* in their literal sense, or *none:* for there is no assignable reason, why *these* should form exceptions. But," added he, "if the general principle of rational interpretation did not relieve me from the difficulty, I would believe, how mysterious soever the doctrine might be, that the sacramental elements were the very body and blood of Christ; because He, who can neither err himself, nor delight to impose on his creatures, has told me so. Though it seemed a contradiction to my senses; and my reason might be ready to revolt from it as an absurdity; I would rather suppose that God wrought perpetual miracles in the case; or resolve the whole of my perceptions on the subject into sheer ignorance; than, for a moment, question what my Saviour had declared to be fact."—

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He did, I grant, select an extreme case for his illustration: but I am most deliberately of opinion, that the principle itself is correct; and that many grievous errors have crept into the church of God, from a disregard to its truth and importance. This persuasion was far enough from crippling his mind in the investigation of divine truth. He brought to the inquiry, indeed, none of that daring hardihood which sacrifices every canon of fair interpretation to the preconception of what a revelation from heaven ought or ought not to contain: for, having once become fully satisfied that the scriptures are from God, he sought with ardor, and he sought with a devotional spirit, the whole will of God; nor did he seek in vain. He was familiar, from his childhood, with those "holy scriptures," which made him "wise unto salvation, through faith in Jesus Christ." They bore him up honorably in the path of life, and they sustained him in that dread moment, when heart and flesh and life failed him.

WE MADE HIS SABBATHS ALWAYS DELIGHT-

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FUL, by contriving to indulge him with such lessons and such engagements as should associate the idea of pleasure with those holy days. His opinion on the subject is preserved in one of those essays, (to which a more distinct reference will be made hereafter) written at the age of eleven, and entitled, "The pleasures and advantages of a religious observance of the Sabbath." Time and experience only strengthened the opinion of his earlier days. His exercises at the close of the public services were of peculiar importance to him; and they produced an effect equally salutary on his understanding and his heart. From the age of five, his mother was wont, on the Sabbath evening, to take him alone, upon her knee, to cause him to repeat what he could remember of the sermons which he had heard; and to pray over what he had recollected. He then said that hymn from Dr. Watts, "Lord, how delightful 'tis to see," &c. The prospect of this evening engagement insured his attention at the place of worship; and the success with which he would, when so young, recapitulate almost every leading sentiment

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he had heard, gratified both his dear teacher and himself. These exercises he continued almost till his beloved mother's death; and never shall I forget the manner in which, when a great boy of nearly fifteen, he would sit upon her knee and repeat his hymn, while his arm was round her neck, and his head leaning on her bosom, precisely as they had been when the practice commenced in his childhood. Often have I entered their room at the close of these exercises; with rapture embraced them both, and enjoyed, in our ardent, holy, mutual affection, all but Heaven. At these, above most other moments, we felt ourselves truly united, and, as forming part of "the whole family of heaven and earth." Religion alone could so sublimate our domestic bliss. And William ever looked back on these scenes as the sweetest and most profitable hours of his life.

It was also our custom OCCASIONALLY TO RETIRE WITH HIM—especially on his birthdays—for the purpose of making *him* the almost entire subject of our thanksgiving and

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prayer; imploring also for ourselves that divine assistance which should enable *us* to discharge aright our important duties as parents. The effect of these retirements was great and salutary. They rendered us, if possible, dearer to each other, by bringing us into more immediate contact with our common Father in heaven, and with our everlasting home. They raised within us a livelier sense of our obligations to Him, and of our duties to each other. I used, at these seasons, to enter into his circumstances and ours, with a minuteness which would have been improper at our family devotions; and I have good reason to believe that he derived lasting benefit from these engagements. His aunt, scarcely less dear to each of us than his mother had been, made up our trio, after the melancholy day that took from us "the desire of our eyes with a stroke." When it pleased God to remove her, in 1818, we daily met, till her interment, by the side of her coffin; and, hand in hand, knelt and wept, and prayed together, as we had been accustomed to do in other and happier circumstances. This prac-

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tice of retirement we three continued, at meeting and parting in May and October, when William left us to prosecute his studies at Glasgow, till the last solemn evening we ever spent together. That night—never to be forgotten by me—after the family devotions were closed, and before we retired to rest, his beloved aunt, and he, and I bowed together before the throne of grace—mingling our joys and sorrows for the last time. Oh! had we known, or even conjectured as, in the slightest degree, probable, what events were to follow so soon, and in such rapid succession, what had that meeting been! Could *I* have borne it? Could *they*? Thank God, the Father of mercies, for our ignorance of futurity! They are gone, and they will not return unto me; but I shall go to them. Our next meeting, I confidently hope, will be before the throne of God and the Lamb; where all tears shall be wiped away.

In a letter of exquisite tenderness, written under circumstances almost more affecting than imagination could create, is the following language, which perfectly harmonizes with the tone of my own feelings. "On

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Thursday last, it was your mournful lot to follow to the grave all that was mortal of your son, your only son, William. But did not the Saviour, whom you serve, see you! had he not compassion on you! does not he say unto you, WEEP not! To the house appointed for all living, WE are on our march. We must meet the enemy ourselves: and shall not the hope of victory make us dry up our tears, for those who have overcome by the testimony of Jesus?—through the blood of the Lamb? I knew, I esteemed, I loved, your dear departed son. I need not speak of his mental gifts—of his literary acquirements—these will be justly appreciated by many who reject, it may be, the faith in which he died. Of this faith, my very dear friend, let us be followers. Then we shall meet in that place, where the Lamb, who is in the midst of the throne, shall feed us, and lead us to living fountains of water; and God himself shall wipe away these tears from our eyes. Then you shall see your son, and I shall see my father, no more to part for ever."—That meeting shall, indeed, "turn all bright again."

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William daily heard the scriptures read in the family, and as constantly knelt with us at our family altar. But we felt it extremely difficult to determine on the right method of teaching HIM HOW TO PRAY. Though no enemies to forms of prayer in the abstract, we thought that when children learn to pray by a form, they too frequently pass through the task, without any exercise of the understanding—without attention. At this time, Mrs. D. met with a passage in Zollikofer's Sermons, which instantly approved itself to our understandings; and on which we proceeded to act. It was this:—"Let your child be taught, in general, its relation to God, its dependance upon him, its obligations to him, &c. &c.: then let it form a prayer for itself. This will require thought, recollection, views of the future," &c.* His mother would take him on her knee, and say, "Now, my dear, think how good God has been to you to-day, in continuing to you your dear papa, and me, and aunt, and other friends; in giving you health, opportunity for learn-

* I do not pretend to give his very words: such was the import of his advice.

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ing, &c. Think of what has been amiss with you. Consider what you need,—his protection, his favor, and his mercy." This would, at times, lead to a long conversation. At length he would kneel upon her lap, with his face in her bosom, and offer his prayers. They were at first, short, singularly simple, but always conducted with the greatest seriousness. Exercise improved his talents; and at the age of eight or nine, he could and did pray with considerable variety, with facility, and, occasionally, with pathos and eloquence. At the age of twelve, and thenceforward, he had a remarkable fluency in prayer, though it was never heard by any human being except his aunt, his mother, and myself. On no occasion could he be prevailed upon, even to his last hour, to take a part beyond that of reading the scriptures, or of reciting a hymn, in the devotional exercises of the family. It was, I believe, pure modesty; but it was carried to an almost criminal length. In my occasional absence from home, he always devolved upon his aunt the task of conducting family prayer, for which he was himself so well qualified.

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We were soon delighted, and made thankful to God, for many striking indications of his piety. His mental talents were developed in a surprising degree, at a very early stage of life; and he seems to have felt the power of religion from the time that he could first form a notion of its nature. He was not a little indebted for this to a young woman, frequently in the habit of working, as a sempstress, at our house. She had, and still has, beyond most, the power of engaging the attention and the affections of children. Many of his hours were spent with her, while at work; and she often attended him to his bed. Religion, than which nothing more delighted him, formed their principal subject of conversation; and I shall never cease to reflect, with pleasure and gratitude, on the circumstance, that that female—whom he continued to love to his dying day, and who now mourns his loss, with a tenderness of feeling scarcely inferior to my own—was so frequent an inmate of my family. She had her reward in the kindness of my son on earth—she will have it more completely in that day and in that world, where

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the fruits of all such labours of love shall be fully reaped.

Amidst those early indications of religion, which afforded us so much pleasure, was his decided, invariable regard to truth. His parents had his entire confidence; and he felt no temptation to deceive *us*, as he was fully aware that his happiness and his woes were our's. We had his affections so strongly on our side, that, independently of a nobler principle, he would have been restrained from falsehood by a regard to our feelings. This may seem to ascribe to him a delicacy, a correctness, and a strength of feeling rather unnatural, or even impossible, at such an age: but it must be recollected, that all his powers had an uncommonly early development: and I pledge myself that such reasons, however out of the ordinary course, did very soon operate upon his mind. While we could calculate on this operation, in all his intercourse with us, we had ever studied to impress him with a sense of the divine presence and inspection. This supplied him with a motive for

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speaking truth in his intercourse with *others* as well as with *ourselves*. And to no part of his character did we ever direct a more constant or more earnest attention than to this. When he was about three years old, an aged female, at whose house he was staying for a day, informed me that William had told a falsehood. As deception of any kind was so perfectly foreign from all his habits, I expressed a doubt on the subject; but she stated such particulars as caused me to fear that he had transgressed. I was thunderstruck and almost distracted; for the information seemed to blast my most cherished hopes. This might, I thought, be the commencement of a series of evils for ever ruinous to our peace. I am not—I never was—naturally of a temper to augur the worst; but the first grand moral delinquency, even at such an age, must commit a breach on the noblest sensibilities of the heart, which cannot but threaten a catastrophe at which a parent may well shudder. *Principiis obsta*, had ever been our motto; and our child lived long enough to feel its importance, and to bless God that his parents

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had never departed from it. I am not sure that my agony, on hearing of his death, was much more intense than that which I then endured, from an apprehension of his guilt. Instantly, but without betraying my emotions, I asked him what he had said. He answered, at once, in so artless and unembarrassed a manner, as to convince me that he was unconscious of falsehood,—that there must have been some misconception in the case, and that my boy was yet innocent. I pursued the inquiry, and in a few moments found, to my inexpressible joy, that he was perfectly correct in all he had stated.

This was the only time in his life in which I had even a passing suspicion of his disregard to truth. On one memorable and most important occasion, in 1820, to which I need not more explicitly refer, and which Glasgow College, with its late and present Lord Rectors, will not readily forget; he received from a distinguished professor a testimony to his integrity which his own heart felt he merited, but which that gentleman conveyed in lan-

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guage and with a manner so peculiarly delicate as to make upon the mind of my son a deeply favourable impression, which nothing but death could erase. In a confidential interview with that professor, he said, "Sir, I was not present on that occasion;* and I can prove an *alibi*." Mr. ——— laying his hand upon his heart, said, "Mr. D., you have removed from my mind a heavy load: I was sure you could not have been in that procession: but you need not, Sir, *prove* an *alibi*; for no gentleman in the University can require a proof beyond your own assertion." To that learned professor, I am myself indebted for the politest attentions and the most tender sympathy, at a moment when my bleeding heart felt the need of all the support that human or divine kindness could administer. And I beg him to accept this public expression of my thanks.

* See his letter, of the 3d series, in Vol. 2, dated Nov. 1820.

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I HAVE presented, in one view, the *general* history of his religious character—though that will be found to run, more or less, through the whole memoir—in order that I might pursue in a more unembarrassed manner, his intellectual progress. It may easily be imagined, that parents not altogether unacquainted with literature themselves; feeling its importance as a copious source of innocent pleasure, and as an instrument of usefulness in the world;* and marking, with rapture, the early indications of superior talents in their child, would apply themselves, with assiduity, to the cultivation of his mind. We were aware that more depended on THE MANNER OF CONDUCTING HIS EDUCATION, than on our best inclinations. We, therefore, read,

* In one of his letters to me during his first session at Glasgow, he writes, "I am glad to hear that you do not neglect classical literature; for, besides its intrinsic, it has an arbitrary value—so to speak.—*It* creates esteem; *esteem*, influence; influence is power; and power will prove, I am convinced, in your hands, the instrument of beneficence."

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and conversed, and thought much upon the subject. While common observation, and our moderate acquaintance with mental philosophy, furnished us with many useful suggestions, Dr. Knox, Miss Hamilton, the Edgeworths, and others, who had written on education, afforded us most essential benefit. To the Edgeworths, however, we were chiefly indebted; as they had presented before the world the actual course of instruction pursued, with such apparent success, in their own family; thus offering a practical comment on their theory. A few years since, my dear William and I read together the Institutes of Quintilian; and I was not a little pleased to find that *we* had pursued with him (from his cradle) almost the entire course of mental discipline, which that learned rhetorician had recommended for the formation of a scholar and an orator. This circumstance may have materially influenced his opinion in favor of that author; but he ever spoke of him, as, with the exception of Cicero, to whom he was devotedly attached, the wisest of the Roman writers with whom he was acquainted.

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We ever felt fully persuaded that, in education, REGULARITY, AND THE FORMATION OF GENERAL HABITS, were of great and essential importance. We had seen many a promising child spoiled—suffered to skim over the surface of things, and continuing a mere sciolist—through the absence of these. We imagined in theory, what we found in fact, that ORDER AND STEADINESS OF APPLICATION are the grand secrets on which so much of excellency depends. Having formed our plan, and determined on a strictly domestic education, we came to the resolution that nothing, over which we had control, should interfere with the execution of our intentions. The friends, who occasionally visited us, were always given to understand that our plan was unalterable; and that they must, therefore, consent to our devoting the accustomed hours to the instruction of our beloved pupil. His mother would say, "If any can be offended with this, they will, of course, cease to visit us; and we may well dispense with their visits: for the welfare of the child shall not be sacrificed to propitiate the favor of such unreasonable guests." Yet,

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however rigid in our adherence to system, we did not assign him too many hours of labour —but our language ever was, "Work while you work; play when you play." We never kept him *very long* at any one thing, knowing that variety of pursuits would operate almost as relaxation. At the age of seven, the habit of regular application was completely formed; and from that time till the moment of his last short illness, mental exertion was his delight. Except during his hours of play, or while he was engaged in those amusements which were deemed necessary for his health, his mind *chose* and *delighted in* steady and intense action; which was so much his element, that he never sauntered about idly inquiring, "What must I do next?" for he had always before him employment sufficient to occupy his whole time and attention.

"The hand of the diligent maketh rich." Great talents are the immediate gift of God; but great attainments are the fruit of personal exertion. It is often the affectation, and sometimes the practical folly, of men endued

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with genius, to maintain that the possession of uncommon powers renders labour unnecessary. That, independently of close application, they may astonish by the occasional displays of strength and originality, few will deny; but without industry, they must never expect to gain permanent and useful fame and influence. My son, if not at play or in conversation, was *always engaged*, though frequently in those lighter studies which relieved, even while they occupied, him. He had a considerable taste for drawing, and has left me several bold and well-executed sketches. In pursuing this amusement, however, he still kept his mental cultivation in view; and would often say, to his mother, "Now, if you will read, I will draw; but unless you will do so, I cannot afford time for drawing." He seemed to give his whole mind to his pencil; yet he had the talent of attending to the subject of the book so entirely, as if he had been simply and intently listening to the beloved reader. The fact is mentioned here merely for the purpose of shewing the habit of incessant, indefatigable industry, induced

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by early discipline, and on which his distinguished acquirements depended.

It must not be inferred from this that he was debarred from necessary play and various recreations. We were always anxious that he should promote his health, and fit himself to go cheerfully to his sedentary pursuits, by a sufficient quantity of relaxation. Our neighbors, who often saw him trundling his hoop, spinning his top, and bounding, with the sprightliness and force of an antelope, from place to place, will bear witness that he was not a confined child—or a little demure old man. His earlier companions, who read this, will recollect that he was ever the boldest and most boisterous boy in all their games and pastimes. And it is singular enough—but it perfectly accords with his influence at a maturer age and among superior companions,—that though perfectly unassuming, and so kind that every *playfellow* was his *friend*, he took the lead in all their pursuits, and retained, without effort, without dispute, and by uni-

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versal consent, the precedency among them. They felt, they knew not how, that he was their superior; though he never, from first to last, made any one painfully feel inferior to himself. When the weather forbade out-door exercise, his mother, his aunt and myself devised every method in our power to keep him in action during the intervals of his study. These means were quite effectual; and no parents were ever blest with a child possessing a more robust and healthy constitution.

In urging him to mental exertion, WE NEVER APPEALED TO HIS AMBITION—never placed before him a vista of literary honors, terminated by something more substantial still. His heart was open to the influence of those nobler motives which operate as surely, steadily, and powerfully, as any which can actuate the *mere* scholar. That, in after years, he was not wholly indifferent to those academic laurels, which, in such profusion, adorned his brow, will be easily believed—and it were a foolish affectation of humility

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to deny.* Yet, I apprehended, there was, at least, *one* who felt more pride,—perhaps, not more pleasure—on these occasions, than he did. His *pleasure* was great, indeed; for, besides the natural feelings created by such honorable and public distinctions, he knew how much his success added to the happiness of those whom he most dearly loved. In a letter of last spring, he said, "It is certainly most gratifying to me, but my chief pleasure arises from knowing how much it gratifies my aunt and you." In his earliest days, we endeavoured to impress him with the consideration—that his time and talents were bestowed upon him by God, and held in trust till that God should call him to give an account of his stewardship—that it was both the duty and the happiness of a creature to "glorify his Creator in body and in spirit"—that the capacity for usefulness generally bore a propor-

* In a letter written during his first session, he says, "I do not wish to be too anxious about prizes: still they would not produce their desired effect, if no palpitations were their consequence. I well know, however, that higher motives should be *the* animating ones."

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tion to mental acquirements; as they enlarged our views, and created for us an influence among mankind, which might be employed for the general good. To these considerations he gave his full assent; and, under their influence, he cheerfully concurred with us in carrying on to a state of great perfection, the culture of his extraordinary powers. And the last letter which I ever received from him, in referring to his prospects in life, breathes that spirit of piety and christian devotedness, which we had endeavoured—and I trust successfully endeavoured—at an early period to infuse. "You know," says he, "by what motives I am actuated in declining to comply with your wishes on the subject of my future profession. The simple question I have asked myself is, should I have chosen the sacred office, if my father had never expressed a wish on the subject? While my heart answers in the negative, I feel that *even* his wishes must not have any influence here,—and only *here*. In every other circumstance of life, I feel it my bounden duty to take every step not only *with*

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your concurrence, but *under* your guidance. * * * Perhaps it may be savoring of vanity in me to say it: but I believe that the ministry would be far from a bad speculation. And I decline it, just because I cannot look upon it as a speculation at all. I think the education you have given me would enable me to attain respectable competence of fortune (I desire no more) and considerable professional eminence, together with more submissive attention than I can hope for elsewhere. While, however, I do not feel that decided inclination, which I believe to be a necessary prerequisite, I feel that to admit any such motives as those named above would be to involve myself in guilt and misery.—*Into your hands, then, I resign the determination of my destinies.* In your wisdom, integrity and love, I have the most unbounded confidence. You know my *predilections*;* but let me beg of you to act as if you did *not*. * * * I need not mention *duty* and the probabilities of usefulness. I think, if two lives were placed before me—one, splendid, happy, and *useless*—the other, solicitous, ob-

* For the law.

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scure, but still *spent in contributing to the great mass of general happiness and virtue*,—I should unhesitatingly select the latter."

One of our first objects was, to fix his attention, by AWAKENING HIS CURIOSITY, AND NEVER REPRESSING HIS ANXIETY TO KNOW BY CHIDING HIM FOR HIS TROUBLESOMENESS. The inquiries of children often contain references to the profoundest investigations of philosophy. On some of these, we can never fully make up our own minds; while others admit of a moral demonstration; or at least of a solution, which, if not absolutely satisfactory, is yet sufficiently probable to admit of being ranked almost among the elementary principles of knowledge. And it belongs to a judicious parent or tutor to determine in what manner to treat the questions with which he is—sometimes, indeed, awkwardly—assailed. Where it was possible, by any simple mode of statement or illustration, to satisfy his mind, we never left him in the dark: but where the subject seemed to us absolutely inexplicable, or not capable of explanation to a child; we

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satisfied him, and yet urged him to further thought, by saying, " When older, you will be able to understand it better: at present, you can know no more upon the subject." His confidence in us rendered such a declaration quite sufficient; and he ceased, for that time, to urge his queries. When we did talk with him, we always found a most willing, inquisitive and intelligent auditor. We trifled, played, and laughed with him; and no child could more enjoy the little pleasantries of life than he: but as to trifle, play and laugh, were not to be the great concerns of life, it was our constant object to store his mind with information; and, above all, to ROUSE HIM TO THE EXERCISE OF ITS POWERS. To this he was easily and effectually roused. And this gave a large compass to his views; made him sensible of his capabilities; took him from the common herd of imitators; gave him a feeling of independence; and threw into his modes of thinking and expression, that charm of originality which, always natural, often surprised and delighted us. At our table, and in our walks, nothing occurred—no single

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fact presented itself—for which we did not ask a reason. His efforts were sometimes successful; and when they were not so, we aided him in the inquiry. And thus, in our ordinary conversations, by the simplest experiments and illustrations, he attained considerable knowledge—besides forming—what is of immense importance—THE HABIT OF ENDEAVOURING TO ACCOUNT FOR EVERY THING HE SAW.

He had a READINESS OF COMPREHENSION AND A NICENESS OF DISCRIMINATION, which are seldom found in children so young as he. An instance, very trifling in itself, but which most strongly confirms the remark, just now occurs to my recollection. I was in the constant habit of going to our place of worship after breakfast on the Sabbath morning, for the purpose of setting my watch by the clock. On returning one day, I perceived a small defect in my black silk stocking, (which I always wore over thin white cotton,) and took it off. William, who was, then, not four years of age, soon after came into the room; and smiling at my piebald appearance, said, with

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amazing glee, "Has papa been out in the town in such a dress?" His mother answered, "No! but I suppose you would have been highly *delighted*, if he had." He instantly rejoined, "No, mamma, not *delighted*, but *diverted*, certainly." She instantly saw the accuracy of the distinction, but, as if ignorant of it, said, "Well, but is not that the same thing?" "No, mamma!—don't you know that that which *delights* is something—something—something—which makes us very *happy*: and that which *diverts* is something *funny*, you know, mamma?" He had never heard a formal definition of these terms; but so great were his observation and the acuteness and accuracy of his perceptions, that he had found, from common conversation, that such were the shades of difference. Those gentlemen who knew him when he was eighteen, and listened either to his arguments in the social circle, or to his essays on the profoundest subjects of metaphysical science in the moral philosophy class, will recognise the germ of those powers which he displayed on such occasions in so great perfection.

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It was our firm purpose NEVER TO SUFFER A SINGLE IMPROPRIETY OF LANGUAGE, either in pronunciation, grammar, or the construction of a sentence, to pass his lips without correction; and that he should, generally, and at first especially, read only those authors which were of classical authority, and which might, imperceptibly, form his style of expression and composition. He reaped great benefit from this determination. We made, indeed, one exception, which had the entire approbation of our understandings and our hearts. In his fifth or sixth year, we put into his hands John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress. After the eulogiums which some of the first English scholars have pronounced on that work of fancy and of truth, which weaves into one narrative the most astonishingly just exhibitions of human nature, with the clearest views of evangelical doctrines and duties, and conducts us through all the windings of the christian course, from the first discovery of danger till the consummation of the character and of bliss;—it is needless for me to add my feeble testimony to its worth. From its influ-

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ence in developing my dear boy's powers, I can never think or speak of it without pleasure and gratitude. He was aware that it was an allegory; and it was his business, for weeks, to ascertain its design in every part. This put his young mind into constant and vigorous action; and, by fixing his attention, and rousing inquiry, had a most salutary and visible influence on his intellectual character. He ever retained a love and veneration for that author: and though in future years, he sometimes laughed at the odd conceptions he had formed on reading some parts of the book, he never thought of it without pleasure. Some years ago, and while William was a child of eight or nine, a briefless barrister, hopeless, perhaps, of distinction in the track of life which his injudicious parents had chosen for him, diverged from his course; and with a quixotism for which his perfect freedom from forensic engagements may account, suddenly became the champion of liberal sentiments and unimpassioned christianity, and threw down the gauntlet of defiance to the whole *evangelical* host. In one of his unfair and

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contemptible pamphlets, he had spoken in bitter terms of the "licentious writings" of that "old immortal tinker, John Bunyan." On reading these words, my son burst into tears, enraged that a professed scholar could be found so ignorant of Bunyan's history; or that the avowed friend of morality should be so base a traitor to historical truth, of which he could scarcely be ignorant; as to charge a man of eminent piety and virtue with a design to weaken the claims of a gracious God on the love and obedience of his creatures. Nor did he ever afterwards hear that barrister's name without a feeling of indignation. He could always allow a fair attack on any opinions, however dear to his heart: but his anger was at all times roused, by profane ribaldry, by intentional mis-statement, or by a ruffian attack on departed excellence.

The principal works to which we first introduced him were those of Mrs. Barbauld and the Aikins, Day's Sandford and Merton, Baldwin's History of England, &c. This last he almost committed to memory. When read-

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ing it, at the age of seven or eight, for the fourth or fifth time, he was so struck with the history of the Black Prince, that he begged his mamma (for I was then in London) to let him read a larger account. She took down Hume, and he read the story with vast delight. As he had promised, before my departure, that he would write to me during our separation, he made this a part of his communication, which, as the very first of his literary relics, I shall here transcribe. "I have taken the liberty to read in your History of England. I have read the battles of Cressy and Poictiers, when the English defeated the French on all sides. You know the particulars—but I must tell you one particular; this is, how noble the Prince of Wales was, and how he made a feast for the King of France, after he had conquered him, and waited upon him himself; and he was exalted as a king in the English camp, and had more honor than a monarch upon his own throne. And, indeed, the soldiers and generals of England have retained that spirit ever since. Indeed there was very great boldness in that reign." He so well

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understood his author, and was so pleased with his style, that he asked permission to read the *whole* of Hume. We granted his request; and here, as in every other pursuit of his life, he was *totus in illis*. As we had always freely conversed before him, he had learned that Hume was a decided enemy of christianity: but that he generally attacked it covertly and cautiously. We thought William might not perceive his more insidious thrusts, but would probably be struck with what was obvious and palpable. To our great astonishment, however, nothing escaped him; and I am not sure whether he did not sometimes imagine indications of hostility where Hume himself was intentionally neutral. But to see the eagerness with which he would run to one of us, on a supposed discovery of the historian's unfairness, and battle with and confute that Ulysses* of infidelity, was equally "diverting and delightful." Our hearts, perhaps, felt more pride in possessing such a mind, than gratitude to Him who had formed it: but our pleasure was almost inconceivable.

* Whom Homer makes a compound of energy and artfulness.

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In more advanced life he read the essays of that learned and ingenious man, whose paradoxes and reasonings are intended and wofully calculated to produce a universal scepticism, to shake the foundation of morals, and to cut off, from wretched man, the last refuge to which he can resort,—the Being and the perfections of a God. Had the dear youth's life been spared, he would, at some future period, have publicly grappled with Hume or his living admirers, and have shewn afresh to that class of mankind, what all candid minds have ever admitted as unquestionable, that weakness of understanding is no necessary companion of a devout heart.

He soon entered on Tyttler's Elements of General History; and, after having become perfect master of them—able, indeed, to follow, without reference to the work itself, the whole of that philosophical arrangement—he passed on to the several histories of Robertson, Watson and others. He was most accurately acquainted with English history; well understood that of modern Europe; and as he was

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conducted, in his classical readings, *through all* the principal Roman, and through some of the Greek historians, he attained a rather unusual intimacy with the transactions and various governments of Greece, and of the *world* included in the empire of Rome. Almost the whole of these acquirements were made before he left home.

As he had, from his fifth or sixth year, displayed a fondness for poetry, we put into his hands The Lay of the Last Minstrel, with a miscellaneous collection from Gray, Collins, Akenside, &c.; nearly all the most beautiful parts of which he committed to memory. In this, as in every thing else, we were anxious that he should UNDERSTAND his authors. A child may be gratified by being able to repeat poetry, and to excite the admiration of friends and strangers; but he will *relish* it and *improve his own taste*, only as, by clearly understanding it, he can form a full conception of his author's meaning, and perceive the images which the poet has drawn. He had so much of the *man* in his mental constitution,—

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perhaps, in the habits created by education—that he never would proceed without understanding what he read. He was not remarkably ready at committing *words* to memory. *Things* once heard or read, he seems never to have forgotten; and even *words*, when thoroughly learned, he generally retained. He soon attained a considerable acquaintance with the British poets, from Chaucer to the present time. Of all these, Milton was his greatest favourite. He began to read him regularly through, when about ten years old; and was, beyond measure, charmed;—for he was, then, sufficiently acquainted with the scriptures, classical poetry, and general science, to understand many of that great man's learned allusions. He frequently—perhaps, annually—read the Paradise Lost, afterwards; and he said, more than once, "I always read it with fresh pleasure and astonishment."* Nor is

* Dr Johnson, either from the love of paradox, or from the force of prejudice, even while doing justice to Milton's genius and learning, says, "Paradise Lost, is one of the books which the reader admires and lays down, and forgets to take up again. None ever wished it longer than it is. Its perusal is a

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this surprising. Milton, who seems to have mastered every department of literature, appears to have selected his great poem for the display of all his stores. It is, in fact, the *triumph* of his mighty mind; in which, anticipating the judgment of posterity, he dared to display, even while the prejudices of his age would scarcely grant him an *ovation*, the rich spoils which he had gathered in his intellectual excursions through ages and countries most remote from his own. If, as it has been said, the ÆNEID contains all the philosophy of Rome in the time of Agustus; the PARADISE LOST may be said to have concentrated almost all that was known in the age of our great epic poet.* As my son's own

duty rather than a pleasure. We read Milton for instruction, retire harassed, and over burdened, and look elsewhere for recreation; we desert our master, and seek for companions."

* While looking for the above extract in Johnson's life of our poet, after I had prepared for the press the remarks in this page, I met with the following eulogium on this great poem. Though the splendor of Johnson may, and certainly does, make any remarks of mine appear contemptible; yet as I had forgotten at the time of its composition what that critic has said, and as it confirms my observation, I will even dare to

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field of intellectual vision enlarged, he saw more clearly, at every perusal, the research, and the beauty of this author. To the poets, were added the British Essayists; among whom, from the purity of his moral sentiments, the originality of his thoughts, and the strength of his diction, Johnson ever stood foremost in his opinion.

His advances in *general* knowledge were steady, rapid, astonishing. His spare hours were filled up with books of heraldry, which subject he had fairly studied—with old French and English writers, as Froissart, Robert of Gloucester, Langtoff, &c. which he read through and through, before he was fifteen—

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transcribe the passage. "Here is a full display of the united force of study and genius; of a great accumulation of materials, with judgment to digest, and fancy to combine them: Milton was able to select from nature, or from story, from an ancient fable, or from modern science, whatever could illustrate or adorn his thoughts. An accumulation of knowledge impregnated his mind, fermented by study and exalted by imagination. It has been, therefore, said, without an indecent hyperbole, by one of his encomiasts, that in reading Paradise Lost, we read a book of universal knowledge."

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and with the passing literature of the day, to which he gave quite sufficient attention. His *copia verborum*, and his chaste and eloquent language, at a very early age, were remarkable; of which proofs will soon be presented, from essays begun at the age of eleven. He never learned English grammar: but as he was almost constantly our companion; never heard any grammatical inaccuracies among those with whom he habitually associated; and read only the best authors; he spoke and wrote English correctly from habit. His Latin furnished him sufficiently with the principles of universal grammar; and his own observation, with a reading or two of Murray's Grammar, supplied him with the peculiarities of his own tongue.

His powers of composition and speaking were, as he ever after thought and said, materially improved by a very trifling circumstance. Most of his young friends went early to boarding-schools; and, as they were at home only during the holydays, he had not always a companion of his own age. From

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the habitual arrangement of my own hours, *I* could not often walk with him from twelve till one; and his beloved mother and aunt were sometimes similarly circumstanced. At such seasons, when the weather was fine, he would go into the garden, take a stick, and march about with unrelaxing gravity, speaking in the most energetic manner. We could sometimes, on looking through the window, catch his eye, and obtain from him one of those lovely smiles which only a parent's eye can fully perceive; which only a parent's heart can feel; and then see him recover his state and resume his speech. On his entrance, he was generally saluted with, "Well, what today, William?" "Achilles, Hannibal, Cæsar, Sir Arthur Wellesley, addressing my troops;" or, "I have been making a speech in parliament, on the state of the nation, on the state of the war;" or, "I have been speaking on the trial of ——." &c. With his young companions, he would convert the parlour into a Court of Justice, or a House of Commons. He was ever the leading orator; and, generally, by the acuteness of his reasonings, or

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the nature of his subjects, left his antagonist barristers, and his parliamentary compeers, far behind him, astonished at his addresses. I have heard clever boys, many years older than he, cry out, "William, William, what is it you mean?—can't understand you."

Up to his twelfth year, however, his views, in concurrence with the wishes of his parents, were, I believe, directed to the ministry of the gospel: but about this time, his inclination took a new, decisive, and unalterable bent. Having, at the age of twelve or thirteen, accompanied his cousin to Dorchester Assizes, he was present at a trial in which Sergeant,—now Judge Best was for the defendant. A very material witness, on the part of the plaintiff, was a boy of about William's age. In cross-questioning this boy, Mr. B. was severe,—not, perhaps, unusually or unnecessarily so; but still, in my son's apprehension, severe. His pity was awakened for the lad; and he became, at that moment, a decided opponent of the learned sergeant. He watched every word of that gentleman's

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speech to the jury, and resolved how *he* would have answered it, had he been the opposite advocate. Ignorant of law, he probably deemed some parts of the speech weak, which were really impregnable. He thought, however, that many of the weak points of the argument were left untouched by the gentleman on the other side; and said to himself, as he afterwards told me, "If I were there, I would soon unravel and expose the sophistry of Sergeant B."—From that time, he determined for the bar; and nothing, ever for a moment, shook his determination. He knew, however, our wishes, and, therefore, did not press the subject upon our attention. When he was about fourteen, I wrote to him from London, on the subject of his future prospects, hinting the necessity of giving a more *specific* direction to his studies; but he dexterously evaded the point, by saying, in his answer, "I hope that whatever may be my future engagements, I shall keep constantly in view the glory of God, and the good of my fellow-creatures." In the last letter I ever received from him, and from which I have

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already presented an extract, he enters fully into this subject; and says, "We all feel that it is high time something should be definitely settled with regard to my future prospects.*** I have always professed a determination to conform myself to *your* wishes wherever I can conscientiously do so: but what practical evidence of sincerity have I afforded? *** My propensity once made known, your goodness and excessive delicacy forbore to remind me of my duty; and as I forgot it, that inclination was immediately complied with. As soon, however, as the truth of the case came fairly before me, I determined to write this letter; and as the determination has been formed for some months past, you are not to consider it as a temporary or thoughtless effusion of confidence and affection: it is, in fact, no more than a recognition of indefeasible paternal rights, of which the exercise is highly conducive to the welfare of the son.*** It is, however, *very, very* possible, to embrace in detail, what one would sincerely reject *on the whole;* and I therefore feel it an unspeakable privilege to apply to *one,* who, like yourself,

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has the same *interests*, without the same passions and prejudices which I have. * * * Immediately next in importance,* are the *chances of professional success*, which must be viewed in connection with the character of him who is to strive after that success. Here I have only one caution to give you; and I am deeply serious when I give it. Always suspect that you *over-rate* me; and on principle abstract much from your estimate of my character, when that estimate forms part of a practical calculation. If, therefore, you find that any situation requires a *given* share of talents and acquirements, take your conception of my abilities, strike off one-third or thereabouts; and then, if you find the remainder equal to the amount required, you may decide with tolerable correctness. But this *correction*, as a mathematician would call it, you must introduce: legal education is expensive, and success very uncertain. If, on the whole, you disapprove of the attempt, say medicine, or what you will. Only you will, of course, form a *comparative*, as well as an

* To *usefulness* of which he had just spoken.

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absolute estimate of these chances: because, while one profession may be poor enough, *all* may be equally so. * * * After this, I wish you to take your *own predilections* into the account—as far, I mean, as these predilections are purely arbitrary: otherwise, they are to be considered as reasons which will have their due weight in your mind; and with you the ultimate decision rests. * * * Lastly, *my own inclinations.* I know you will not like to oppose these, under the idea that my happiness will thus be compromised. I beg, however, that no feeling of this kind may have any influence. Happiness and the gratification of inclination *are* distinct, *may* be opposed to each other. 'I have no wish for the expensive title of barrister, with a pocket purseless and impoverished friends; still less, with the heavy condemnation at last of having mispent my opportunities of good. Again, therefore, I say, let the claims of *duty*, of *prudence* and of *filial affection* be fully satisfied first of all. After this, if any question remain, refer *that* and *only that* to my predilections.—In addition, I have only to say, inquire immediately, and decide before I leave

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College. Once more, do not *refer* the matter to me. This letter is not matter of form and ceremony, or even of duty merely. When I say, *Decide for me,* I mean, *Decide for me.* All I want is the result of your inquiries. With entire confidence in the wisdom of your decision, I am perfectly unsolicitous about the premises on which your conclusions may be founded. You may or may not state those when you announce that conclusion. Till then, however, I should be sadly mortified, if letters, which ought to be the effusion of the heart and the representatives of social chit-chat, were to be encumbered even with family business. Let me, then, have nothing more, except your kind compliance with my request, that you *will* decide, and then your ultimate decision. *If you deem it prudent for me to take the lower walks of either profession, you need anticipate no objection from my pride.*"

My mind had been long made up; and, on every consideration, after he had declined the ministry of the gospel, I thought it proper for him to enter into the law. And I certainly

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had hoped to have seen him an ornament to the bar. If the fondness and the folly of a parent had indulged a faint expectation that, as far as his religious principles would have permitted, he might have risen even higher than the bar, *parents* will, at least, pity, if they do not forgive me.

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At the age of seven, he began to learn Latin. My friend, Mr. Bullar, of Southampton, for whom my dear boy, who could almost *divine* the characters of his fellow-creatures, felt, to the end of life, unbounded admiration —afforded me the benefit of his advice, at the commencement of this part of William's education. I was a novice at teaching; but, aided by my friend, I entered upon it with confidence and pleasure. My first intention was, merely to have trained him myself till ten or eleven, and then send him to Southampton. From this I was afterwards deterred by the express desire of Mr. Bullar, who, modestly, and, I believe sincerely, however incorrectly, thought, and assured me, that *we* could do much more for him at home, than, under his circumstances, he could accomplish for him at school. His advance through the grammar was sure, not rapid. In the declensions of his nouns, or the conjugations of his verbs, I would sometimes bet him ten kisses that I could go through them faster and more accurately

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that he. And this was a stimulus which he was eminently formed to feel: no severity could have urged him to so much diligence: his heart could always be touched by an appeal to his affections. After he had fairly mastered "The Accidence, As in præsenti, Propria quæ maribus, Syntax, and Prosody," I divided the whole into twenty-four parts, which he repeated daily;—thus accomplishing his task every month. This, I find, he continued to do till the end of his life. He parsed, of course, as he read, and thus applied his rules: but the practice of monthly repetition kept them ever ready for application. Before he went to College, at the age of a little more than fifteen, he had read *through* the elementary books of the Valpys,* with Eutropius, Nepos, Florus, Justin, (twice) Cæsar, (twice) Sallust, (twice) Livy, Tacitus, several orations

* Mr. B. recommended *double translations* through Valpy, and some other elementary books—a plan pursued by Roger Ascham. As I was guided by his advice in almost every part of my son's classical education, it is probable that this suggestion was attended to. Of its great utility, there can be no question: but I am unable, at the distance of eleven or twelve years, to say how far it was carried with him.

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and some philosophical pieces of Cicero. He read frequently the Eclogues, Georgics and Æneid of Virgil; with Lucan's Pharsalia; Excerpta of Ovid, which contain most of the unexceptionable parts; and such parts of Terence, Martial, Persius and Juvenal, as prudence permitted. All the finest parts of those poets—especially their bold and tender descriptions,—he had committed to memory. My friend had furnished me with Didot's edition of Horace, printed at Paris, from which all the Pagan filthiness of that beautiful author is ejected:—and can it be worth while, for the purpose of maintaining the integrity of his writings, to publish edition after edition for our seminaries of instruction, and to thrust upon the attention of the young, scenes and language which, however popular at Rome in the days of Augustus, or in England during the reign of Charles II. are fit only for a brothel, and are condemned equally by the sober dictates of common morality and the authoritative mandate of divine revelation!*

* "Let no CORRUPT COMMUNICATION proceed out of your mouth; put off all these,—anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy,

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This expurgated copy he generally used; and, as I had fixed with a pen the mark of reprobation on all the indecent passages in my own complete editions, on which he might occasionally light, he never read one line that could awaken a passion which christianity teaches us to suppress. He committed to memory the *whole* of Horace's Odes, the *Carmen Sæculare,* and *De Arte Poetica;* all which he repeated, at least, four times every year.

At his first Session in Glasgow, he gained the chief Latin prize at the Black Stone examination; and made one of the largest "*professions*" that any of his age had ever been known to make. The profession for *competition** consists in meeting several of the professors: with fellow-students as judges; and the person who "*competes*" recites to the professor of his class a list of authors, of which

FILTHY COMMUNICATION, out of your mouth." Eph. iv. 29. Col. iii. 8.

* A full and almost ludicrous description of this will be found in a future extract from a letter of the first series from Scotland.

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he *professes* himself the master; and offers to read, *ad aperturam libri*—the examiner opening as many of the authors, in what places he pleases, or to which chance may direct him. I have before me a list of thirty-nine authors, which he professed on that occasion. All who pass from a lower to a higher class, undergo a Black Stone examination, (so called from the students' sitting at the end of a long table on a black marble slab;) but the *competition* for prizes lies among those few who have the courage to dare bravely, and to meet the cleverest and boldest of their companions in literature.

At the age of nine, he began to learn FRENCH, under his beloved mother, who spoke that language with fluency and correctness. After his progress in Latin, he found this very easy; and soon read through many of the Poets, Racine, Moliere, Crebillon, Delille, &c.; together with Pascal, Fenelon, Du Bosc, Saurin, &c. It was originally intended that, after he had been four years at Glasgow, he should spend a year either at

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Paris, or at the University of Montaubon; but this purpose, at his particular request, we had for some time relinquished.

The next year he entered upon the study of GREEK. It was impossible that he should not admire the Greek historians and poets; though he thought even *they* had been over-rated. That the expatriation of the Greeks, by the capture of Constantinople, and the consequent diffusion of Greek literature, contributed most materially to the revival of learning in Europe; and that nothing *then* existed which could bear comparison with the chaste and beautiful writings of the ancients, he readily admitted: but he thought it mere pedantry to offer a homage to them, which should imply a contempt for the moderns. He thought, and others thought with him, that whatever might be the powers of the ancients, they did not surpass, in any department, writers who have lived since the revival of learning; while, in some departments, they fell far short of them. During one of his vacations, after he went to College, he wrote a very elaborate essay on

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"The advantages of classical literature," in which he said all that he could say in favor of the ancients; but his sentiments on the comparative worth and beauty of the classical and more recent writers remained unchanged.* Of the Greek *philosophers* he used to say, "It is classical treason to declare it; and, therefore, I must take care before whom I expose myself; but I think most of these are mere driyellers." He was particularly struck with this when we read together the Ethics of Aristotle. He thought that, as a philosopher, Cicero threw all the Greeks into the shade. This might be true, without any disgrace to them: for *he* enjoyed the advantage of all *their* lights.

* In this Essay, he says, "Let us consider the poetry of Greece and Rome as affording the best models for imitation. When I speak thus highly of the poetry of the ancients, I do not mean to depreciate that of the moderns. There is about some men a sort of servile adoration paid to the authority of antiquity—but arising from any thing rather than from a true perception of the beauties they affect to admire—which leads them to sacrifice, at a shrine that prejudice, not reason, has erected, all the most unquestionable claims of cotemporary genius."

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My dear son, however, moving, as he did among the fine writings, and curious but unsatisfying speculations of the classics, learned to perceive, more and more, the necessity and advantages of that divine revelation, which has thrown open to the most uneducated christian, and placed among the first principles of his knowledge, the truths for which so many powerful minds had been for ages searching in vain. "The world by wisdom knew not God."* He saw that while philosophers, toiling in the dark, had only accumulated a mass of errors, with here or there a particle of truth, rather "received by tradition from their fathers,"† than elicited by their own efforts, God had "revealed" his perfections, the nature of his government, and the riches of his grace, "to babes."‡ He excepted from the mass of trifling philosophers, one distinguished man. His great favourite of pagan antiquity was Socrates,§ who had, as he thought, drawn moral

* 1 Cor. i. 21. † 1 Pet. i. 18. ‡ Matt. xi. 25.

§ The writer and his son had read the different reviews of *Mitchell's* Aristophanes; from which they learned that that accomplished and elegant scholar had, as it was natural to ex-

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science out of the obscurity, in which the miserable sophistry of the rest had involved it. This excellent man he ever designated, "the St. John of heathenism:" and he wondered how any *scholar* could maintain, that that almost inspired sage virtually abandoned the principle of the divine unity, for which he dared to die, by requesting, as Plato, in his Phædo, relates, that his attendants would offer a cock to Æsculapius. Is it forgotten that he did this—if, indeed, he really did it at all—only as he was just sinking under the stupifying influence of poison? My son also greatly admired the distinguished disciple of Socrates, Xenophon, whose Memorabilia, Cyropædia, and Anabasis, he read through. Besides, portions of almost all the different Greek classics,

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pect in translating a work so intimately connected with the fate of the Athenian philosopher, made some remarks on the character of Socrates. My impression is, that his animadversions were unfriendly to the sage. I have not the talents —nor would this be a proper place—to discuss the question of his claims to the unqualified admiration of posterity: but William, whatever he may have heard or read, retained to the last the favourable opinion which he had formed, some years before, on reading the Memorabilia.

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he read with me the whole New Testament and Septuagint, before he went to College.

When eleven years old, he began to learn ITALIAN, under his mother, and read with her Metastasio, Tasso, and some other of the poets —what they read in prose I forget. He never appeared afterwards to be at a loss in translating any thing he met with in the course of his reading.

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Just about this time, HE BEGAN TO WRITE THEMES almost every Friday forenoon. He generally chose his own subjects; though we sometimes chose them for him, or the passing events of the day suggested them. He always wrote upon his slate, read them to the family, and, for a long time, understood that they were rubbed out and lost. But both from their extraordinary character as the productions of a child, and in order to preserve a permanent memorial of his mental progress, I copied them off, even from the beginning. After having done this for some time, I made no secret of it. As those productions afford a fair specimen of his habits of thought and modes of expression; and do, I think, contain a proof of the precocity, vigor, and cultivation of his powers, I shall take the liberty of presenting a few extracts—assuring my readers, that, as I copied them with scrupulous exactness from his slate, I give them as exactly in these pages. I have not the folly to imagine that these early productions of his

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pen can gratify persons of matured understanding, further than as they afford an illustration of his mental progress. The first of the following essays was written, when he was about eleven years and three months old. I have inserted in succession, pieces written at the intervals of three or six months, in the first series; and every one who understands composition, will instantly perceive his rapid improvement in the choice of his words, the structure, harmony, and force of his style. I shall pursue the same course in the two subsequent periods; and leave the intelligent reader to form his own judgment of that child who began the last, "ON THE CONNECTION OF IDEAS," before he had attained his fourteenth year. I may remark, in passing, that, as far as I recollect, he never obtained assistance in writing any of these pieces, by *reference* to *books*. He had conversed, read, and thought on all these subjects; but when he wrote, he drew immediately from the stores of his own mind.

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THEMES

Written between the Age of Eleven and Twelve.

ADVANTAGES OF THE STUDY OF HISTORY.

(*Dated April*, 1814.)

The advantages of the study of history are various. Even if there were none, it seems natural to wish to know the degree of civilization and freedom which our fellow-creatures have enjoyed, and the forms of government under which they have lived, in various ages and countries. But besides the *gratification* which it affords us, several *advantages* arise from a good acquaintance with it. By presenting to our view the actions of great and good men, it stimulates us to exertion, that we may imitate them. It is said that Julius Cæsar, when he read the actions of Alexander, wept that he, though he was as old as that conquerer, had performed no action which equalled any of his,

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Besides affording examples which may stimulate us to noble and useful actions, it *warns* us to avoid those which are base or hurtful. What king of England would attempt to levy taxes without a parliament, or to encroach on the civil or religious privileges of Englishmen, after the fate of Charles I. and James II.! And will not the fall of Napoleon Buonaparte shew all future kings what a vain attempt it is to subject all Europe to one man! What people will imitate the French Revolution, after knowing the murders which were its immediate consequences, and the despotism to which it ultimately led! Besides all this, we see for what wise ends the darkest providences were sent; and that the greatest judgments have ultimately tended to the good of mankind.

THE DISADVANTAGES OF SOLITUDE.

(*July*, 1814.)

Solitude has been supposed the fittest situation for contemplation and devotion, and for the cultivation of all the most excellent qualities of the soul. It has been loved and sought by some men, from a natural morose-

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ness of disposition—by others, because they have been disappointed in the pursuit of honors or riches, and so disgusted with society—and also by some good and wise men, who would have been, perhaps the honor of their age, and the lights of the world, if erroneous ideas of devotion had not led them astray. But how great are the pleasures and advantages of society! In solitude, there are none who may partake one's joys or griefs—a man must suffer his afflictions, and enjoy all his happiness (if it is possible to possess any in such a situation) alone. There is none to console the man when in distress, or to counsel him when he knows not how to act. But in society, our sorrow is, at least, *alleviated*, by the condolence of those who love us; and pleasures are doubled, by knowing that all our joys make a friend joyful. There are in society wise and good men to advise and admonish us. All these advantages are lost in solitude.

O solitude! where are the charms
That sages have seen in thy face?

I think the love of society *natural* to the human race. There may have been some exceptions:

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but they are, in general, considered as monsters, rather than men.

ON THE EVILS AND ADVANTAGES OF EMULATION.

(*November*, 1814.)

SOME of the most noble and useful properties and dispositions of the mind, if unrestrained, are in danger of becoming evils rather than goods. Emulation is among these. It requires the greatest care and attention. If it is depressed, it degenerates into sloth; if cherished, it is in great danger of growing into ambition. A lawful emulation spurs men to attain superiority by lawful means. When it is swelled beyond its just limits, it incites a man to endeavour to gain his ends by unjust measures. Emulation is a lively principle of the mind, stirring men up to noblest actions; but ambition is like a fire in the soul, which will continually torment it. The just office of emulation is to make one stretch every nerve to attain the end in view: but when once a man hates another because he is his superior; or considers *him* as a rival, who, by his con-

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duct, has gained the esteem of others,—then that man's emulation has degenerated into base *envy*, which is active, not to equal its superior, but to ruin him by calumny. And thus an envious man endeavors to rise by means of the destruction of those with whom he is connected. *Quo non livor adit*

Nations are preserved by Emulation. Literature and the fine arts are served by Emulation. This principle reigns in the heart of a peasant as completely as in the heart of a king. This principle works as powerfully in the soul of a school-boy, as on the mind of a Wellington! The slave, as well as the freeman, the poor as well as the rich, the ignorant and the learned—all feel its influence—

"Untam'd by clime, the generous instinct glows,
"Far as Angola's sands, as Zembla's snows."

It was Emulation that excited Cæsar and Alexander to conquer; and this inspired the pen of Virgil; and to this we owe our Chathams, our Marlboroughs, and our Wellingtons.

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THEMES

Written between Twelve and Thirteen.

ON DECISION. (*February*, 1815.)

MANY of the best properties of the mind, when possessed in an excessive degree, are hurtful; and yet almost all of them are apt to run into extremes. Zeal may beget fanaticism; strong reasoning powers, an argumentative turn of mind, may create scepticism; emulation may become ambition; and, in like manner, decision may degenerate into obstinacy. Nevertheless, we ought not to confound these various qualities. We need not dislike zeal, because we hate fanaticism; we need not admire scepticism, because we are fond of acute reasoning: it would not be right to discourage emulation, because we see the fatal consequences of ambition. And it is an equal mistake to confound decision with obstinacy. Though they are, (if I may so speak) of the same species, they are far from being the same

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thing. Decision is determination and firmness, governed by reason, directed by wisdom, and associated with prudence:—while obstinacy is unrestrained, governed by passion, and directed by folly; opposing only that which is good; determined only in that which is evil; vaccillating, when it ought to decide; deciding, when it ought to consider.

Equally opposite to both of these is Indecision. It shows a vast weakness and imbecility of the mind when a man is always halting between two opinions; when the slightest arguments can determine him; and arguments still weaker unfix his determination; when he never knows what course to take, what sentiments to adopt. Nothing can be done without decision, in peace or war, in the affairs of a nation, or in those of an individual. Decision has formed the characters of a Marlborough, a Nelson, a Wellington, and an Elizabeth;—while Indecision and obstinacy united, distinguish those execrable princes (the disgrace of Scotland, and the curse of England) the Stuarts. It is decision by which Britain

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has overthrown the tyrant. It is decision by which Europe has thrown off the yoke of slavery. And it is decision by which Britons have obtained their present rights and liberties.

POLYTHEISM. (*March*, 1815.)

WICKEDNESS produces negligence; and negligence fosters ignorance. Mankind, who had received the knowledge of the only living and true God from their father, Noah, lost it by degrees from among them; and gave themselves "to believe a lie." But reason; tradition; the testimony of the earth, with its flowers, its fruits and its verdure; the testimony of the heavens, with their wonders—all—all—concurred to prove a God. Thus far went reason, but no farther: for, unilluminated by the lamp of revelation, and unenlightened by the torch of truth, she wandered in endless mazes of error and folly. 'The Sun enlightens us, and He shall be our God. The Earth nourishes us, and we will adore Her. But who formed the earth? We know not.

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Who created the sun? We are ignorant. Who "spake and it was done, commanded and it stood fast?" We know of no such Being.'

But even this was too refined for them. They considered their gods only as more exalted men. They no longer worshipped the sun; but the god of the sun—a god cursed with all the passions of a very bad man. The number of gods was multiplied; and almost every tree, every fountain had its divinity. Not content with this, they proceeded a step farther; and deified men were placed among the gods, and stood next to the throne of Jupiter. These marvellous and incongruous tales, these numerous and jarring divinities, were adorned by the pens of an Ovid, a Homer and a Virgil: and their ridiculous and impure rites were sanctioned by the examples of a Numa, a Cato, and a Pompey.

As for the philosophers—what they disbelieved we know—what they believed, we can hardly tell. Although they contemned the rabble of divinities worshipped by the vulgar,

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they had too much timidity or too much policy to publish their opinions:—for, if they had destroyed, could they have re-edified? If they had pulled down the fabric of superstition, could they have built a more noble structure on its ruins? Had they "cast their idols to the moles and to the bats," would they have instituted a religion more agreeable to truth? What could they have done? Would they have reformed polytheism? Alas! the efforts of the best of idolaters manifest the impracticability of this. Would they have philosophized the world? It is impossible: or, had it been possible, they would have reasoned thus:—"If the world is philosophized, I am no longer a wonder, no longer a sage, no longer a demigod." Would they have established a belief in *pantheism*? If every thing is God, nothing can be God: for He is the ruler of the universe. But if the earth is a part of the universal Godhead, it has no superior; and (unless you suppose it to possess an intelligent spirit) it is, according to this system, governed by chance. This would indeed have been to take away all the restraints which the

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hope and fear of future rewards or punishments might have inspired.

But, amidst this universal darkness, a taper had long burnt in the sanctuary, and had illuminated the narrow land of Judea—and *there* "the sun of righteousness arose, with healing in his beams;"—and his peaceful soldiers, animated by the example of their divine master, and following the footsteps of their general; carried his standard and his victorious arms, where the Roman legions had never penetrated, and the Roman eagles were unknown. They displayed the bright light of the gospel, in the most distant regions; and idolatry and ignorance fled before them. And although the wicked persecuted the church of Jesus, they could not destroy her. She sits on a mountain, and while the lightnings play and the thunder roars below her, she may smile at their rage, knowing that she has an Almighty Friend; and confident that in "fulness of time," *his* glory, whom she adores, "shall cover the earth."

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WHAT RELIGION IS MOST CALCULATED TO PROMOTE THE HAPPINESS OF INDIVIDUALS ?*

(*May*, 1815.)

TARTARUS and Elysium, the paradise of Mahomet, or the Indian heaven, may scare or delight some minds equally weak and credulous; may afford to the philosopher a subject of investigation; to the wit, a subject of derision; and to most men, a subject of indifference. Their state is pitiable; for the most *credulous*, when about to launch into the immeasurable ocean, and to plunge into the unfathomable abyss of eternity, must feel a great deal of terror; and fear the anger of those gods, whose commands they have broken through, in following their example.† The

* This essay had been preceded by three others.—"Some religion necessary to the existence of society."—"What religion is most conducive to the interests of society." And, "Religion of some kind necessary to afford men satisfaction." I transcribe the above, not because it has more excellence than either of the others, but because it was written at a greater distance of time from that on Polytheism.

† I find in the book from which I have transcribed this essay, a note which I wrote at the time of inserting it. "I asked

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philosopher, void of all religious opinions, unable to determine the being, much less the attributes, of God, may be proud of the little knowledge he has acquired, and may, perhaps, have placed his error on the throne he had prepared for truth. He may feast his imagination on the admiration of posterity; he may fancy himself crowned with the praises of future ages; but when old age or death comes upon him, he is no longer able to *investigate*, no longer able to *prove*. Does he look forward? All is darkness. Does he look backward? All is error. Does he look around? There is no light to guide him.—The *wit*, dazzled with his own brilliance, shines like a meteor, astonishing all around him, by his

William, on his reading this, "*Do* the heathen gods, according to the poets, punish those who follow their example?"—He instantly referred to Horace, Ode 18, Book 1, in which *Bacchus* enforced sobriety, by exhibiting the bad consequences of intemperance:—

"At, ne quis modici transiliat munera liberi,
"Centauria monet cum Lapithis rixa super mero
"Debellata," &c.

And added, "Homer makes *Jupiter* punish Paris for a crime of which he himself had been repeatedly guilty."

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superior lustre. It is *but* a meteor, and it sets in darkness. When he has time for reflection; when eternity is near; he sees a dreadful gulf opened under his feet: but the abyss is covered with darkness; he dares not fix his eyes on it; and he cannot avert them from it: he dares not plunge; but expects soon to be precipitated into it. Something within assures him that there is a future state.

But I am now come to the fourth class. The *indifferent* can no longer be indifferent; the careless can no longer be careless; when death and eternity come to support the terrors of conscience. When the tumult of the world no longer drowns the small still voice of conscience, the darkness by which they are enveloped cannot hide the whole of futurity from them; and the clouds which hang over it rather increase than diminish its horror. There is no way of escape, there is no light, there is no one to guide, no one to direct.

I have gone far enough with this melancholy picture: and, surely, that is the best religion

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which delivers men from so much darkness and misery. What religion effects this? We pronounce immediately, "The Christian." It has, I think, been proved,* that virtue produces happiness. That the christian religion is the purest of all religions, has, I think, been sufficiently shewn.* The enemies of the gospel, even if opposing a cheat, are opposing a cheat in which the happiness of the human race consists. Let them, then, tell us of the happiness of the pagans! They cannot struggle against facts! Oh! thou bloody city of Juggernaut, ye pilgrims, fainting under its scorching sun, bear your united testimony to the happiness of pagans!

THE EVILS OF DESPOTISM AND ANARCHY COMPARED.

(*October*, 1815.)

It is an old assertion, that there is nothing worse than anarchy. But it is also true, that there are few things worse than tyranny. I shall endeavor to compare these two great evils. Absolute power vested in one man, *is*

* Referring to one of the immediately preceding essays.

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not necessarily connected with tyranny. A good king may be invested with absolute power, and use it only for the *good* of his subjects. But I am now speaking of a tyranny, under which no man is safe;—and any man may be imprisoned, tortured, or strangled, without being able to ascertain the cause of his punishment;—under which none but the most obscure are safe;—the powerful and the rich in continual danger of losing their fortune, their liberty, and their life. The tyrant himself is, perhaps, an upstart, who has gained the throne by multiplied crimes: or, if not, he is, it may be, governed by infamous favourites, or his himself of so bad a disposition, that he delights in the misery of his subjects.

But when a nation has thrown off the yoke of oppression, that nation may not find it so easy to rebuild as to pull down; and it may not be able to erect an orderly edifice on the ruins of ancient establishments. It may not be able, after the tumult into which a revolution has thrown it, to separate the bad from the good, to separate that which is useful from

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that which is injurious: it may not be able to draw the line of distinction between that which is ancient and that which is odious; between licentious anarchy and a just degree of freedom. In such a state of things, ambitious men, whose interest it is to influence the public mind against all that is ancient, all that is venerable, all that is excellent,—endeavor, by their harangues and by their conduct, to throw the nation into a state of anarchy, that they, in the tumult, may become its rulers.

And thus the name—and the name alone—is changed. It is, indeed, no longer the tyranny of an ancient and honorable family: but it is the tyranny of upstart plebeians—men whose elevation is the fruit of their crimes; and who are lower than the common vulgar—more cruel than those generally thought cruel—more detestable than those commonly detested,—men who, to attain power, have fawned on superiors whom they hated, and courted a commonalty they despised; who have carried all their vices with them into power, and have left the few virtues they did possess,

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behind. And though *their* power may be short-lived, yet others, as ambitious and as wicked as themselves, are ready to succeed them.

SUPERSTITION. (*December*, 1815.)

We take a melancholy *pleasure* in examining the dilapidated walls, the falling arches, and the solitary columns of a magnificent ruin. But if a man had possessed that building when in a perfect state; if he associated with each ruined arch the idea of some long lost pleasure; if every stone reminded him of some friend that was gone for ever; if desolation pervaded the place that had once witnessed domestic happiness; if brambles grew on that hearth where he had been accustomed to sit, and if ivy crept round the room of which he was once peculiarly fond;—*his* feelings would be those of unmixed melancholy. Such is the human mind! A few solitary columns, a few broken arches, fallen pillars, scattered chapiters, and defaced sculpture, are the sole indications of its original

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beauty. Man once possessed this habitation: but it is now in ruins; and I shall endeavor at present to examine one part of these ruins. I shall first consider Superstition itself; then its causes; then its effects; then its advantages.*

I shall consider Superstition itself, as of two kinds. It is first, a disposition to recur to preternatural agency and mystery: secondly, a disposition to give the glory of the Creator to the creature. That this is a line of distinction between these two is obvious; but it is more difficult to determine its situation. To effect this, I must consider, first, the inclination some men feel to recur to preternatural agency and mystery. This is but an intellectual error—an error produced by education or by habit; and is not inconsistent with the greatest purity of soul, or the greatest mental

* If the "*advantages*" be a part of the "*effects*;" it must be considered that the writer was not thirteen. He unquestionably meant, by "*effects*," the natural, and by the "*advantages*," the accidental, consequences of Superstition. We never knew on what subject he was writing, until he brought his slate; and had we known, we should not have assisted him; as our object was to make him think and work for himself.

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vigor—I say, the *greatest* mental vigor; for men of the strongest minds have been very superstitious—a Brutus and even a Johnson being examples.

I may not yet have defined, with sufficient clearness, what I mean to include under this kind of superstition. It is not superstitious to recur to supernatural and divine agency; we know that even an hair of our head falls not to the ground without divine permission:—but it is superstitious to believe that common or even extraordinary occurrences are the effect—not of those second causes which God has appointed, and which he manages, but—of a certain mysterious power which we cannot explain. It is not superstitious to believe that invisible and even wicked agents have a great influence over us; but it is superstitious to believe that they put on a bodily form,* or

* I am not bound to reconcile these two sentences; nor am I pledged to *any* of the opinions in this and the other essays. I merely give them as specimens. A nice discerner, however, may, perhaps, perceive an intended distinction between what is *possible*, what *has been* on extraordinary occasions, and what *actually is*, in the ordinary arrangements of providence.

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that any particular appearance is an indication of their presence. It is not superstitious to believe that God *can* permit and *has* permitted pure spirit to take a bodily form;* but it is superstitious to believe that this is done on common occasions, or that such extraordinary and miraculous means are resorted to, to accomplish an unworthy end. It is not superstitious to receive religion with all its marvels; but it is superstitious to receive *even religion* without examination. This implicit faith in the common religion, because it is the common religion, has been the foundation of the temples of Venus and Bacchus; it has supported the papal throne, as well as the ridiculous doctrines of the Koran.

But I turn from the merely intellectual, to the moral ruins of human nature. The temple is ruined, it is true; but, what is worse, it is *defiled*. Where, formerly, Reason sat enthroned, Error now reigns. Where Charity, Wisdom and Peace once reigned, there Hatred, Strife and Superstition now wield their scep-

* See the preceding not

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tres. The veil of the holy of holies is rent, the sanctuary is thrown open to every intruder; and Satan has entered and defiled it. The obscurity of tradition handed down from father to son, was increased by every repetition: and fallen man has always been more fond of accommodating his creed to his desires, than of accommodating his desires to his creed. The bloody Saxons chose Odin as their principal divinity. Venus was worshipped by the luxurious Cyprians. The powerful Jupiter was adored in the capitol; and to the god of poetry were dedicated the groves and vallies of Greece. In fact, every stream and every hill had its own peculiar god.

I have now to consider the different *causes* of these two different kinds of superstition. The causes of the first kind of superstition are—*The love of a violent stimulus*—*The desire after immortality*—*The love of prying into mysterious secrets*—and—*Ignorance.* There is a singular analogy between the tastes of the body and those of the mind. And, among other similarities, they are both *fond of violent*

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excitements. Marvellous occurrences are to the mind, what strong drink is to the body. Like *it,* they inflame, and leave a kind of void behind: they disgust the mind with all wholesome food, with all the common occurrences of life; but great part of their charm is taken off, if we doubt the truth of the relation. This is one cause of superstition. But again—*The desire after immortality.* There is something revolting in the idea of being laid in the dust, and so annihilated. There is something sad in the idea that the wit, the orator, the warrior, and the husbandman must all lie down together in a common grave. And, thus taught by tradition, and by their own desires, men have aspired towards a future state of being. But they were unable to form any just conception of it; and the frightful questions presented themselves on every side, "Where am I going?—To what society shall I be introduced?" They have appealed to reason; but reason has been silent; and imagination, with all its phantoms and vagaries, has been substituted for it. Again, another cause of superstition is, *The love of prying into mys-*

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terious secrets. There was a time when the judgment was governed by God, and when judgment governed the will, and the execution of the will was not impeded by adverse circumstances. But now this fair picture is reversed. The judgment is corrupt, and is influenced and governed by a corrupt will: or, where the mind is under a better influence, obstacles to the fulfilment of its desire are continually presenting themselves; and its different properties, like parts of a deranged machine, impede what they were intended to facilitate: that which was once all harmony and order, is now confused and disproportionate. The desires are as unlimited as they ever were; but they flow in different channels, or rather from a corrupt fountain. Instead of aspiring to virtue and immortality, they entwine around, they embrace, the world. Instead of desiring any thing that is honorable or of good report, they cling to every thing that is dishonorable. But, among other strong desires, *curiosity* is one of the strongest; and, in some cases, one of the most laudable; in others, one of the most hurtful. You find that

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from the little child, to the wise philosopher, all are dissatisfied with the present state of knowledge, all participate in the pleasure of learning something. "Still onward! onward!" It is, then, no wonder, if men have sought to dive into the secrets of futurity. Hence they resort to cunning men, who pretend to tell them what is to come to pass; but who rarely satisfy their superstitious hearers by a direct answer to their inquiries. They have also resorted to spectres and phantoms.

> "Rocking on the billowy air,
> "Ha! what withering phantoms glare!"

They have thought that, by intercourse with the dead, they might gain some information on so important a subject, and thus they hear, with the utmost attention, and believe, with the profoundest reverence, the most incredible stories. Again, *Ignorance* is another cause. And, under this head, I might have comprised all the causes of superstition: but as brevity was not my object, and I wished to be explicit and intelligible, I have divided the subject into several particulars. For were not

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our taste vitiated, and our knowledge impaired, we should not seek a "*stimulant*" by any unlawful means. The "*desire of knowledge*" produces only a good effect on those to whom life and immortality are revealed. And the very idea of a "secret" implies ignorance. The human mind is ignorant, yet wise in its own conceit; and the little light that it gains, unassisted by revelation, only serves to show the thick darkness that surrounds it. Philosophy has, indeed, attempted to remove the difficulty, which, like the stone of Sysiphus, recoils, and crushes the hand that attempts to move it: but its endeavours have been useless. Nevertheless, the ignorance to which I refer, is rather a *general* ignorance than an ignorance on particular subjects; and we do find that where general knowledge is prevalent, superstition is banished; and that men are more or less superstitious, according to the portion of information that they have acquired.

I should *now* have considered the causes of *Idolatry*; but this is, alas! to be referred rather to the depravity of the heart, than to

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that of the understanding. I will, therefore, proceed to the *effects* of superstition. Some men, always ready to oppose any thing which can tend to civilize or bless their species, since they find that the universal cry of England has destroyed the Slave Trade, have entreated us, that, although we are determined to deny the Africans the unspeakable pleasure of being transported and worked to death in a foreign land, we would, at least, leave the heathen their innocent superstition. Innocent! Let War show her thousands of dead, and Superstition shall show *her* ten thousands! Witness! ye miserable victims crushed under her chariot wheels! Witness! Witness! ye infants, whom the cruelty of your parents has exposed to the heat of a vertical sun, to hunger and thirst, and wretchedness!—and, with united voice, bear witness to the innocence of superstition! It debases the human mind; it restrains its powers, and tyrannizes over them; it hardens the human heart, and steels it against the most natural and almost instinctive feelings:

"At thy command, he plants the dagger deep;
"At thy command, exults, though nature bids him weep."

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Superstition though it wears the garb of religion, is a very different thing, both in its principles and in its effects. Religion emanates from the bosom of God, and produces charity and *good* works; while Superstition, arising from the fancy of men, or from the machinations of Satan, produces strife, envy, and *evil* works. Religion commends itself by meekness and love: Superstition is distinguished by hatred and desire of revenge. Religion uses only lawful and laudable means to establish her dominion; but the arms of Superstition are not only carnal, but diabolical. Such are the general effects of Superstition.

I have now to consider more particularly its *advantages:* and these are rather negative than positive. It prevents *Atheism:* and, where united with Christianity, it in some measure guards it from the attacks of scepticism. If the heathen, deprived as they were of every source of instruction, and of every spiritual idea of God, had not been helped in their conceptions of the Supreme Being, restrained from sin, and assisted in their devotions, by

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Superstition, they must have become Atheists both in theory and practice. It may sometimes also strengthen a man's belief in christianity. Many men have been educated in such a way, that they know but little of religion, and yet are well acquainted with the Superstitions with which the fancy of men has disfigured it, and have been taught from their childhood to revere them, and to connect them with the idea of religion. These, then, have guarded religion, till the man has been able to examine it; and then, having seen the beauty of *undefiled* religion, he takes away the incumbrances with which it was surrounded, and casts off the chains with which he himself was bound.

But still, the *evils* of Superstition vastly preponderate. And we are happy that we can look forward to a period when Truth shall come in like a flood; when the river, which springs from the throne of God, shall grow wider and wider, shall overflow its banks, and refresh, and fertilize, and beautify that "dry and thirsty land where no water is;"

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when the Sun, which is now rising, shall shine forth in full splendor, and shall dispel the mists of darkness and of error; and when Truth alone shall reign.

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He continued his weekly compositions from thirteen to fourteen; and I should, with pleasure, continue the extracts, did I not fear that I should weary my readers with too great an abundance of these juvenile, or rather childish, productions. The last prose piece which he wrote was on "THE CONNECTION OF IDEAS." It is far too long for insertion; and though it contains many beautiful thoughts, clothed in charming language, I can dare to offer only the commencement and the conclusion of the essay. It was begun when he was thirteen years and nine months old.

THE CONNECTION OF IDEAS.

(*September*, 1816.)

ALL sciences may be divided into two classes:—those which are purely speculative, which afford considerable amusement; but in which the lover of his species and the lover of improvement can find little or nothing that may serve to strengthen his own faculties, to

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sweeten his own disposition, or to ameliorate the condition of mankind at large:—and those which, while they are continually opening new sources of pleasure, strengthen the faculties, enlarge the mind; and, contributing to the happiness of their possessor, enable *him* to contribute largely to the happiness of the world. The subject which I am to consider unites all the advantages I have enumerated. To the man who is fond of reasoning and speculation, it will afford matter of contemplation which will delight, but never cloy; satisfy, but never satiate him; while the philanthropist may make it the foundation of new plans, by which he may bless, and raise, and dignify mankind. Whoever studies this subject will find that, as he passes on, fresh prospects are ever opening before him; that as soon as he has gained one object, another, brighter and more lovely, presents itself; and that regions more beauteous than those through which he has already passed, invite him to continue his endeavours. Man, like every other species, has his distinguishing peculiarities:—a peculiar conformation of body; peculiar habits; and a

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mind peculiarly vigorous, when compared with the lower creation. Minds too have all some things in common, some distinguishing traits which none can mistake; and which that poor despised creature, whose intellect scarcely raises him above a brute, possesses in common with the mind of a Virgil—perhaps, in common with the highest archangel in heaven. "The connection of ideas," then, is one of those things which I consider as necessary to the very existence of mind *as* it exists on earth. It is indispensably necessary, because the judgment, the fancy and all the powers of the mind are its offspring; and because nothing can be done without it, by the philosopher in his study, or by the mechanic in his daily occupation. But before I attempt to prove what I have asserted, it will be necessary to explain the Ideas which I attach to the terms which I have used.*

* * * * * *

* Here intervened many pages, written at various times, during about three or four months; but, for the reason already assigned, they are omitted. What follows was written on the last two mornings.

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I have now to consider the *imagination*. The mind of every man seems to feel its own grandeur; but external circumstances keep it down, shorten its flights, and repress its exertions; but the moment you can detach it from ordinary objects, it begins to soar and expatiate in a world of its own, which resembles the world that surrounds us just as the celestial colors of the rainbow resemble the clouds they adorn. Hence the frequent sublimity of dreams, and the energetic eloquence of madness. It is true, that in such cases our ideas are often fixed on common affairs; and then indeed they have all the whim of insanity without any of the grandeur which it sometimes possesses. Yet when once the real world ceases to haunt us, imagination creates an ideal universe, and luxuriates in her proper sphere. The associates she forms are also entirely different from real men. She paints them all, glowing with the colors of heaven, or tinged with the darkness of hell. The scene is ever shifting as the actors are strange; sometimes decked with the flowers of paradise, and soon wrapped in the deepest gloom. She often endures causeless, un-

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accountable miseries, and is sometimes elated with the most exquisite joys; sometimes filled with hope, and often sunk in despair! Yet "THE CONNECTION OF IDEAS" is, in some sort, necessary to the exercise of this faculty. We have no example of a mind utterly devoid of connection, so that we can scarcely determine the effects of its destruction.

* * * * * *

And now had I determined to eulogise the human mind; had it been my design to throw the deformity of the heart into the shade; and to lose sight of the depravity of our morals, amid the dazzle of intellectual brilliance; what could I have said more highly commendatory of our mental perfection, than that the principle of ORDER—the moving principle of the universe, the grand principle which puts the power of omnipotence into action—is the main-spring of the human soul, the foundation of its greatness, nay, the very stamina of its existence?

Nevertheless, true—incontrovertibly true—

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it is, that the love of order has been injured, though not destroyed,—that some grand intellectual as well as moral shock has been sustained by humanity. We see its ravages in the greatest mind; and, although they resemble the traces of an earthquake, which has rent an Alp asunder, they are but ruins still. I must leave it to divines to determine by what means that shock was given; and whether the depravity of the human heart alone has debased the intellect, or whether the same shock which *effaced* the moral, *defaced* the *intellectual* image of the Deity. But the fact is certain; and if we refuse to admit it, we find that all our speculations on this subject are restrained by insurmountable difficulties, and all our most plausible reasoning but a tissue of sophisms: we are acting against *experience;* we are in the labyrinth of Minos, without a clue to extricate us; we find ourselves at sea, without a compass to direct our way; and surrounded with rocks and quicksands, without a beacon to shew us a place of safety.

But while it is necessary for the philosopher

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to calculate on this mental blindness; it is far more essential to the philantropist and politician to calculate on depravity, both *intellectual and moral*. The benevolent must expect to find that his labors are undervalued by the folly, and chilled by the ingratitude, of mankind—while the legislator must always prepare himself for resistance against his most beautiful theory; and remember, while, like the patient artist, he is endeavouring to realize forms of ideal beauty, that he too is working on bad materials; and that he has an additional difficulty to encounter in the propensity his most perfect work will always have to relapse into its original deformity. It is true, that much, very much, may be done by benevolence and wisdom; but the very exertion their operations require, sufficiently shows, that IMPROVEMENT IS A MOST UNNATURAL THING. Leave a man or any set of men entirely alone; suffer things to take their natural course, without the restraints of law, the fostering care of a paternal government, and the enlightened efforts of benevolent superiors;—and twenty years would undo the work of ages. We must

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be *forced up* in the scale of intellect and morality—it is sufficient to *let* us down.

Nevertheless, defaced as is the statue, how much beauty yet remains! how much to show its Author! and how much likeness does it still bear to superior intelligences! Hapily, that likeness shall be completed; and our little fires at once encreased and absorbed by the fountain of eternal radiance.

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Perceiving in several of these pieces, a considerable play of imagination, and something approaching to the elevation of poetry; I often said to his mother, 'There is here and there something like a poet in our dear boy.' Yet I more frequently said, 'William, you will make a very good metaphysician, perhaps, a good mathematician; but never a poet. How can you become one? for neither father nor mother have a particle of imagination to give you.' This, I conceive, determined him to try. He did not write, I believe, "because the numbers came;" but because he wished to see what he could do. This was no unusual thing with him. Feeling, I suppose, the strength of his powers, he always attempted what was represented to be, or what was in reality, the most difficult of its kind.

In April, 1817, while I was in London, his mother, to my great surprise, sent me a few verses written by him. He happened to see the plays of Crebillon at a shop in the town, and begged his mother to purchase them for

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him. On the following Friday, intent as usual, upon his new volumes, he said, "Let me write a translation of the Idomeneus." 'By all means.' "But shall I give you an *elegant* translation?" She, smiling, said, 'As elegant as you please.' In two or three hours, he brought her ninety lines, from which she sent me the following extract:—

Back to the shores of Crete I haste, I fly,
Nor think of danger, though 'twas now so nigh.
I will not tell thee all the tale obscene,
The direful vengeance of the Paphian queen.
Her hatred, strengthen'd by the loss of Troy,
Still strives unwearied till it shall destroy.
Nor does *her* arm alone the vengeance sway,
But all the gods are seen, in proud array,
Combined to blast my peace, my hope, my all,
Until beneath almighty power I fall.
Old Crete appear'd, and all my wishes flew
Towards Cidonia, which was now in view;
When sudden o'er the heavens a dark'ning cloud
Obscured their brightness with its sable shroud:
The rattling hailstorm rush'd along the sea,
A flaming ocean in the sky we see;
The gaping waves a thousand dangers show,
Dread as the gates of everlasting wo:

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The north wind *groans* not, but it *roars*, it flies,
And rends the sea, and shakes the burning skies!
Above, around, below, 'tis all the same,
One universal sheet of billowy flame!

For several successive weeks, he continued and completed that translation; and never wrote, till he went to College, another prose essay. Some time before this, I had picked up in his study a scrap of paper on which some rhymes were rather illegibly written. I asked him what it was, without dreaming that it was a production of his: he looked at it, took it out of my hand, said, it was not worth reading, and put it into the fire. When I returned from London, I found accidentally lying upon his desk a similar piece; and, after decyphering his almost hieroglyphical writing, made out a spirited address to a noble poet, whose very name,—connected with all that is transcendant in talent, and base in morals,—produces a strange and painful mixture of admiration, pity, horror, and indignation. Oh!

"What is thy poetic fame!
"What is thy melodious lyre!"

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Passing over this address, I will here offer a few other specimens of poetry, written when he was between fourteen and fifteen:—

ON THE SETTING SUN, (*July*, 1817.)

1.

Oh! have ye ever seen the orb of light,
When rolling clouds obscure his evening ray—
No longer dazzling your astonish'd sight,
But softly sinking in the western wave,
Which proudly swells to meet the Lord of Day,
And seeks the flaming chariot wheels to lave?

2.

Proudly he sets, and gilds the ocean's breast,
Possess'd of beauty's mildest, softest charms:
The rising ocean greets the royal guest:—
Just as the charger knows his rider bold
Laughs at the battle and the din of arms;
Proud of the purple and the splendid gold.

3.

That globe of flame is not so dazzling bright,
As when he blaz'd amid the azure sky,
Dispensing universal heat and light;
While every part of nature seem'd to smile,
And ev'ry flow'ret rais'd its head on high,
As if 'twould bless the king of light the while.

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4.

What tho' less glorious its evening gleam,
Yet will he not a double splendor pour
When soft Aurora shall disclose his beam,
Opening the gates of day with roseate hand,
Refulgent with immortal brightness soar,
And roll a flood of brilliance o'er the land?

5.

Soon shall he shine, illuming happier skies;
No cloud shall darken *then* his golden ray:
From spicy groves a thousand odours rise,
The flow'ret blushing at his warm embrace,
The rivers glittering, while the zephyrs play,
And jubilee is kept in ev'ry place!

IMITATION OF HORACE,—Ode 4, Book 3.

(*July*, 1817.)

"*Descende cælo, et dic age tibia,*" &c.

1.

Descend from heav'n and tune thy golden lyre,
And nobly teach thy suppliant bard to sing,
Sweetly to chaunt the grand immortal strain,
Or wake the harp's mellifluous tones again;
Inflame the poet's soul with heavenly fire,
Till softly warbles every trembling string,
And the bold chords with thund'ring music ring.

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2.

Heard ye!—or was it Fancy's pleasing dream?—
Hark! for they sound the loud celestial lyres!
Look! for I see Elysian fields appear!
With raptures bright, th' ethereal people hear!
More brilliant now Creation's beauteous beam,
While heav'nly music heav'nly joy inspires,
Which, flaming high, to heav'n itself aspires.

3.

And I too wander 'mid the fields of light—
So did an omen prophesy of yore—
When but a child, o'ercome with sleep and play,
Wearied, on Vulture's mountain lap I lay;
The lovely birds of Cyprian Venus bright,
With greenest, freshest foliage strew'd me o'er,
And all around ambrosial sweetness pour.

4.

And all who dwell on Acherontia's crest,
The Bantine hills or rich Ferentum's vale,—
When thus they saw me, wonder'd much to find
No pois'nous serpent round my body twin'd.—
All undisturb'd by savage beasts my rest,
Fann'd with the breathings of a gentle gale,
Blest with protection that can never fail.

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5.

Th' immortal laurel and the myrtle wreath
Show'd me that I should find your ready aid,—
And your's I am, ye muses, when I lave
My burning limbs beneath the cooling wave—
When cold Prænestes purest air I breathe,
Or when I walk 'mid Tibur's grateful shade,
Or plunge amid the Sabine mountain glade.

6.

It was your shield protected once my head,
Amid the thund'ring crash of battle-roar—
And still it is your ever-watchful eye
That guards me from the dangers always nigh—
Now your impenetrable mantle spread,
And, with a robe of radiance cover'd o'er,
Beyond the reach of human thought I'll soar.

7.

With you I wander, fearless, ev'ry where:—
What, tho' the bounding sea around me foam?
Tranquil along the Bosphorus I sail,
Tho' lash'd with all the fury of the gale:
Safely I draw the desert's burning air,—
Unhurt among the bloody Spaniards roam,
Or find, amid the western isles, a home.

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8.

Secure I'll pass the Scythian's rushing flood,
Nor dread the fierce Barbarian's certain dart;
While you, ye Muses, sheltered from the sun,
Sing, in Pierian cave, the honors won
By great Augustus, amid toil and blood,
While the disbanded veterans all depart,
Each with a satisfied, a grateful heart:—

9.

Rejoice to meet the ancient soldier's ease,
Rejoice to see the polish which you gave
To mighty Cæsar's manly virtuous soul;
How at his beck, the wheels of empire roll,
How the old warrior smiles to see the trees
Wave round the cot, with which the leader brave
Would bless the pause 'twixt labor and the grave.

10.

What is brute force, without an active mind!
Such was the giant Titans' horrid might.
Almighty power enraged against them cast
His sheeted, lurid lightning's withering blast.
Where could the wretches, then, their courage find?—
How did they tremble at th' unequal fight,
And fear omnipotency's piercing sight!

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11.

What though heaven groan beneath the weight of arms!—
Think you that Jupiter, enthron'd in light,
Cares for the tumult? * No! but with a nod, [god;
Shakes heaven, earth, hell, and shows himself a
Laughs at the rattle of the vain alarms,
Looks down and smiles from his refulgent height,
And shines with undiminished splendor bright.

12.

And what though mountain upon mountain rise,
And seek to reach the golden lamps on high!
Yet how can great Typhoeus' giant hand
Porphyrion's strength or Rhœcus' force withstand
The mighty soldiery of all the skies;
Or how against the sounding Ægis fly,
And all the vengeance of the gods defy!

---

* I really conceive that there is something so mean in the original idea—

"Magnum illâ terrorem intulerat Jovi
Fidens juventus."—

that I have dared to desert my model; as I could not reconcile myself to a *cowardly omnipotence*.

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13.

The host of heaven exult in strength divine:
Here stands the monarch of devouring flame;
Here heavenly Juno, armed with heavenly might;
And there the youthful beauteous God of light;
Castalia's dew-gems round his ringlets shine,
Celestial glory sparkles through his frame,
While Lycian groves re-echo to his name.

14.

The Titans fell;—for how could brutal force
Destroy the fountain spring of all that's wise;
Dry up the sea of knowledge, love and joy,
Of boundless power to save or to destroy;
Arrest that mighty ocean in its course,
Disarm the dreaded Thunderer of the skies,
Or hope above infinitude to rise!

15.

For so the hundred-handed Gyas fell;
Lustful Orion,—chaste Diana's foe—
Swift from the virgin's piercing arrow fled:
But th' unerring archer laid him dead:—
The light'ning's storm pursued the rest to hell;
And Earth, which chains him down to fire below,
Groans, while she sees her children's overthrow!

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16.

In vain they strive, in vain they tug their chains,
Altho' the eating fire for ever glows,
By vultures torn, the heart of Tityus lies,
All undiminished Ætna's summits rise,
A hundred triple bands to fiery pain
Confine Pirithoüs, with eternal blows,
And scorpion-lashes leave him no repose.

The translator adds:—

Nor in Pieria's grot, O heavenly muse,
Nor round the fabled throne of sov'reign Jove,
Nor near old Athens' classic groves art thou:—
But thou art all around me: I hear thy voice
Amid the howlings of the tempests' cry,
Or in the zephyrs softly whispering—
Thee in the waving trees, the glittering streams—
Thee in the billowy ocean's loudest roar—
Thee in the gentle harp's mellifluous sound—
Thee in the thunder roaring o'er the sky—
And thee I find amid the mountain tops,
Or polish'd plains, or heathery hillocks wild!
Thee I invok'd, when first I undertook
The high emprise of following angel-wing,
Or one that soar'd high as angel in
Th' expanse of thought. And now my work is done.

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Shall I be thankless, if, upon my head
Be plac'd the laurel crown of victory?
Or tho' no laurel deck my humble lay,
Shall I be thankless; if I have transfus'd
Its bright effulgence from one noble line
Of thy most favor'd child, or breath'd his soul
Into the grandeur of my native tongue?

During the same summer, (while he was between fourteen and fifteen) he began "THE WIZARD," a most wild, imaginative production. Its plot, as far as it goes, is rather inartificial; and I am unable to say what he intended as the catastrophe; for he proceeded only through a part of his plan. The fragment consists of somewhat more than a thousand lines; and it is written in three different stanzas. I shall not offer an analysis of the imperfect poem, but give a specimen of his versification from each part.

FROM PART I.

1.

THERE was a glen of dreaded fame
On England's northern shore,
Whose horrid rock's extremest point
Withstood the ocean's roar.

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2.

And from within, if any man
To enter it would dare,
He might behold the roaring waves
In dread confusion there.

3.

But no one *dared* the entrance dire,
With craggy rocks o'erhung;
And never there had human voice,
Or human footsteps rung:—

4.

Except that in a dismal grot
An aged man did dwell:
Above him, groan'd the mountain flood,
Beneath, the gates of hell.

5.

And ever on a mystic staff
The ancient sinner bends,
While far below his snow-white zone
His silvery beard descends.

6.

One vernal morning, as the sun
His flaming chariot roll'd,
And bound upon Aurora's brow
Her diadem of gold;

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7.

And day, that over all the sky
Its sparkling joy display'd,
Had forc'd a kind of gloomy light
Athwart the dreadful shade;—

8.

The gilded waves, rejoicing, wish'd
To kiss the smiling shore;
And ev'n the mountain cataract
More softly seem'd to roar.

9.

The Wizard only wretched lay
Beside a brook that stole
Betwixt the aged mountains grey,
Its crystals smile to meet the day,
And bless her as they roll.

10.

"The gentle air that breathes on all
"So innocently free,
"And carries to the bounding heart
"A sense of liberty:—

11.

"This tortures me. If fiery streams
"Across the land would flow,
"Or if the Simoom's breath of flame
"Upon the earth would blow;

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12.

" Or if upon destruction's wing
" The tempest fiend would ride;
" Or if the thunderbolt would fall
" To punish human pride;—

13.

" Then might I breathe my native air,
" On cloudy chariot rise;
" And shake beneath the flaming wheels,
" The arches of the skies;

14.

" But no! for happiness around
" Mocks, with her smile, my woes;
" The laughing sun, the teeming ground,—
" And ev'n the brook's mellifluous sound
" Torments me as it flows."

He said—When, lo! an orphan child—

* * * * *

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FROM PART II.

SWIFTLY the seraph held his onward course,
All undisturbed—(as by the ocean's force,
The gallant ship—when, through the purest sky,
Quickening, but not tumultuous breezes fly—)
Till he descended on a fertile strand,
Where rolling waters softly washed the land.
There dwelt an aged hermit in a cell
Hid in the deep recesses of a dell,
That opened to the sea towards which there flows
A stream that far within the valley rose;
Now softly glittering to the sun's bright ray,
Now madly holding its impetuous way,
Through beetling rocks, that, with their summits high,
Look like some old supporters of the sky;
Then softly spreading in a lake so fair,
As if the skies above were sleeping there,—
A second heaven, without a wave to harm,
Or ripple to destroy the holy charm.
Thence softly, swiftly do its waters flee,
And long to meet the loud majestic sea.
Like some good man, whose innocence and truth
Have bid the world conspire against his youth:
Ev'n then, though human passions stir his breast,
His unbent course is to'ard his heavenly rest.

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They *force* him into noise and tumult, still,
For he is peaceful as the smoothest rill,
Which, when it ripples—in that gentle sound,
Is only whispering happiness around.
But when long rolling years have conquered all,
And *forced them* at the shrine of worth to fall;
Then, peaceful, pure, he lifts an eye of love
(Where all is peace and purity)—above:
Just as a mirror, from its surface bright,
So does his heart reflect celestial light.
But when old age has spread its gloomy cloud,
And gathering winters round his temples crowd,
So he too presses to'ard the unmeasured sea,
The boundless ocean of eternity.

FROM PART III.

Many a year had pass'd away,
Gone was many a smiling day;
And night, for many a silent hour,
Had worn her silver diadem
That silently proclaimed her power,
And glittered like a radiant gem,
That marks some monarchs dreary sleep
Within the caverns of the deep.
So then it shone, and sailing through
An ocean of celestial blue,

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Saw her own brilliance to and fro
Wide dancing o'er the deep below,
Whitening the distant sails that gleam'd
Where sea and sky appeared to meet,
And the old ocean, joyful seem'd
Pressing to wash the Heaven's fair feet.
The bounding vessel skims the tide,
And, o'er Cerulean ocean wide,
Springs, laughing at the waves which pay
Their homage, and then turn away;
Now, foaming, dash against the prow,
And then their crisped heads they bow.
Above, the gallant streamers wave,
The sailors smile to see——their grave.
A shriek of horror!—Hark! it sounds
To the horizon's utmost bounds!
Another shriek! the wave clos'd o'er,—
They shall not shriek, nor struggle more!
Yet one there is, divinely strong, &c.

* * * * * * *

The last portion of this fragment was written about April, 1818. His beloved mother, who had contributed so much towards the formation of his mind, was delighted with this Tale, and our dear young poet continued it chiefly for her amusement. Soon after he

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had completed the thousandth line, an event happened which threw a deep gloom over us all; any reference to which long filled our eyes with tears, and our hearts with agony; and, at this moment, fills *me* with unutterable anguish. He never touched the poem again; I believe, never looked at it: his muse remained for a time, and I feared would remain through life,

" Lorn as the hung-up lute that ne'er had spoken
" Sweet sounds e'er since its master chord was broken."

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Thus, for years, passed life most sweetly away—our affection and comfort, *if possible*, increasing hourly. The long imbecility, and the death of his maternal grandmother; and the continued bodily infirmities of a most beloved aunt, were the only domestic evils he was called, for a considerable time, to witness. His grandmother, who had been for more than fifty years of her life distinguished for her great good sense, hospitality, and christian piety, died in February, 1817, at the advanced age of 79. His *aunt*, (who, though afflicted, yet in such beloved society, and blest with the richest consolations of religion, still *enjoyed* life)—his *mother* and *myself* felt a growing delight in our dear and common treasure, who was all that the fondest, the proudest, or even the holiest relatives could wish. Amidst the ten thousand conceivable possibilities or probabilities of his future life, I had, notwithstanding her ill health, *generally* associated his aunt, and *always* his mother, in my dreams of earthly bliss. But God, whose "thoughts

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are not as our thoughts," had intended far different scenes for them and for me. "He hath chosen," and let Him choose "my inheritance for me." "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

At the close of 1817, his mother's health became impaired. Her vivacity, her general benevolence, her tender affection for us, remained unimpaired. We passed the winter in some comfort, with our two dear invalids; who, however, were sometimes incapable of seeing each other for nearly a week together. But though we had long considered Miss Friend's as a hopeless case, *we* had no serious apprehensions for Mrs. Durant. Her ceaseless animation deceived us. And her mind was never more alive; her heart was never so intent on doing good. In her various weaknesses, which rendered personal exertion in the cause of humanity and religion impossible, she would often say, "My only grand wish for health is, that I might not be so useless as I am in the world:" and some of her very last hours were spent in contriving to promote the

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happiness of her fellow-creatures. While we were dreaming of her recovery,—scarcely suspecting, even for a moment, the slightest danger—our friends, it seems, who saw her less frequently than we did, and could mark, with greater precision, her decays; whispered to each other the fears which their tenderness forbade them to communicate to us.

On Monday, the 4th of May, 1818, she and her sister went as far as Wilton, on their way to Melksham Spa. At the house of our dear friends, Mr. and Mrs. Bristowe, they met, for a week, with all the attention which affection could devise and supply. William and I followed them, on the next Monday, with an intention of accompanying them to their ulterior destination. We had hoped that the waters, air, and scenery of Melksham, would have restored to us, in perfect health, our *dearest* sufferer; and that even her sister would return improved. We left Poole, by coach, in higher spirits than any with which we had ever quitted home before: for we were going to those who had always rendered that

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home what it had been. We talked by the way of meeting them; his heart was peculiarly delighted; and every scene through which we passed for nineteen miles, seemed to present charms undescried before.

Alas! our joy was but of short duration. Soon after our coach arrived at Fordingbridge, where it stopped a short time, we saw a post-chaise approaching us with almost incredible speed. "Are Mr. Durant and his son in the coach?" roused us from our dreams of pleasure, and forced upon us a melancholy presentiment of the evil that awaited us. "Is she alive?" burst instantly from our lips. 'She was,' said the messenger, 'when I left Wilton.' We entered the carriage; I fell upon my dear son's neck in agony; he was thunderstruck and speechless. We passed rapidly on with a silence interrupted only by our sighs and occasional bursts of grief. In three hours from the moment that the messenger left Wilton, during which he had ridden thirty miles, we arrived at the house of our friends. "Is she yet alive?" 'She is.' We were

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ready to rush to her bed-side; but prudence, in her dying state demanded caution. At length I saw her, restless in body, and almost struggling with the final attacks of her malady; but, in soul, "calm as summer evenings be." She conversed as readily and as sensibly as ever. As it would have been dangerous to have greatly excited her, I sat by her bed-side, silently musing, suppressing my sighs, and shedding my unobserved tears: but at length ventured to ask, whether she would see her beloved William. She answered, "I shall, I hope, be better prepared to see him to-morrow morning: at present it would, I fear, too much agitate me." Alas! she was destined to see him no more till they should meet in heaven! About nine that evening, she was suddenly seized with convulsions, which were, in a few minutes to terminate her mortal career. I called up my dear boy, and he had the melancholy satisfaction of witnessing her last struggle. I fell upon her lifeless corpse; and loosing, for a moment, all self-control, uttered my piercing cries; while he fell on his knees near her bed-side,—and, pale

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as death, with a countenance equally expressive of woe and resignation,—faltered out, "Oh! Heavenly Father, sustain us!" In a few minutes, I was sufficiently collected to bend upon *my* knees with him and his dear—and scarcely less-afflicted—aunt; and beg for grace patiently to bear, and rightly to improve, the awful chastisement.

During our connection for more than sixteen years, I had had many fears on her account. A fright produced by the dangerous situation of William, when eighteen months old, brought on an alarming illness, attended with some singular phenomena.* This illness, by

* The *most* singular of which respected her MEMORY. The illness happened in *July*. She was then advanced six months in a state of pregnancy, and was, while perfectly insensible, delivered of a child. On awaking from the insensibility, which had continued for three days, she imagined it was the month of *January*. Her mental powers, generally, were but slightly impaired, and soon regained their former perfection; *nor was her* MEMORY *affected, except as it regarded the* PRECEDING SIX MONTHS. Of *that* time, she had forgotten *all* the events. Some accidental circumstance might afterwards occasionally produce a train of thought, which would bring an event of that six months to her recollection. Several of the

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impairing a constitution hitherto peculiarly good, endangered her life during every succeeding state of pregnancy; and once or twice her confinement had placed her, in my apprehension, within a step of death. At these melancholy seasons, I had, as I thought, realized her death, and the effects which that event would produce on my mind. But till the moment of separation actually arrived, I had not the slightest conception of what I should feel—when hope became utterly extinct.—On this subject—succeeded as it has been by other equally mournful events—I dare not—I must not—I ought not—to dwell.

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most important, however, were never regained: *nor could she I believe, to the hour of her death, remember that she had then been pregnant.* The fact has been mentioned to several gentlemen of eminence in the medical profession, and to a few who have paid particular attention to mental philosophy; but I have not found one who has met with a precisely similar case; or who could venture to offer a physiological solution of so singular a phenomenon. *Something* similar, I am aware, happens in old people.--It has just been suggested to me that Dr. Beattie, in his "Essay on Truth," mentions a fact somewhat resembling this. I cannot, however, find it in the section "Of the Evidence of Memory;" and, as the printer waits for the sheet on which I write, I have not time for a more extended search.

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I cannot but remember, with devout gratitude to God, that her singularly-endowed mind was inspired, adorned and blessed with a large share of genuine religion, which taught her to employ all the influence that her talents acquired for the general good. I write for the perusal of many who knew her; and I may confidently appeal to them, whether she was not one of the greatest blessings to the place of her residence that it has fallen to their lot to know, respect, and love. Her memory was embalmed by the regrets of thousands, and by the tears of a most extensive circle of friends who either concurred with her in her "labours of love," witnessed her zeal or partook of her numerous kindnesses. No death, within the whole range of my acquaintance—except that of my dear son—has ever produced a deeper or a more general sensation.

My mind, it will readily be believed, was absorbed in grief for a loss which, however expected by our friends, came suddenly upon us; and which broke the charm that had given

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to my future plans and hopes almost their entire interest.

"She was my life's unerring light—
"That quench'd—what beam could break my night?"

At this moment, however, the thoughts of my son and afflicted sister mingled with my sorrows for the departure of a most beloved wife—of a wife whom I all but adored, and to whom (under God) I must ever feel that I owe the best portion of my imperfect character, and a large measure of the little respect I have gained, and the good I have done in the world. Deeply affected, however, as my mind was with one great evil, I could not, even for an hour, be indifferent to the happiness of those who seemed *now* cast upon me alone. I knew that the *possibility* of a change in my future condition, which might banish her or render my home less pleasant to her than it otherwise might be, *would* present itself to both of them, and greatly aggravate the bitterness of *their* loss. I formed my plan at once;—and shall ever rejoice that I did it;—and that even the kind and disinterested re-

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quests and intreaties of my beloved sister, who afterwards feared she might stand in the way of my happiness, could not induce me, for one moment, to falter in maintaining my purpose. Within a few hours of Mrs. Durant's death, I said to both, "Your happiness is mine; I can scarcely be wretched, if you are comfortable; I cannot possibly be happy, if you are not so. We return to Poole; and, remember, my dear sister, you are, from the moment of our arrival there, the mistress of my house; the adopted mother of this dear boy; and nothing but death shall separate us." They were most greatfully affected by my declaration, which, after all, was as essential to my happiness as to theirs. We, then, embraced each other "over my dead," as if she were the silent witness of my vows to make her dearest kindred happy; and, even amidst "the sickness unto death," which one of our trio was, we were confident, doomed to endure; we hoped yet to enjoy a few days' happiness: and, blessed be God, we were not disappointed. I hoped

> That ev'n in widowed life my son might shed
> Rays of enjoyment round my aching head;

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As violets from the bank on which they rise
Pour showers of falling sweets—*

William, who had ever affectionately loved his aunt, seemed, from this moment, to devote himself entirely to her comfort. And never did the most impassioned lover display a more ardent desire to promote the happiness of his mistress than he to secure her's. He seemed to anticipate her every wish; and would, at any time, to the last evening that he left us, have foregone any engagement that might, even by possibility, have withdrawn him from the opportunity of contributing to her pleasure.

Our griefs, on returning to our once loved home, were inexpressibly great. But we had every thing around us to alleviate our sorrow. Our friends vied with each other in expressions of sympathy, and in proofs of real friendship. My own affectionate congregation, from whom I have, for more than twenty years, received an unbroken series of kindnesses, wept for me as for a brother; redoubled their assiduities; and sought to make my burden

* From the Wizard.

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light. My own house, though deprived of its chief ornament, had yet much to attach me—a *sister*, whose very infirmities gave her a stronger hold on my affections; and a *son*, who, on that occasion, became my chief comforter. Oh! how do those charming and eloquent conversations, with which he endeavoured to raise my fallen spirits, as we paced arm in arm, about our garden, now recur to my recollection; and at once *wound* my heart, and *soothe* its anguish! He once said, in the most serious and impassioned manner (referring me to a saying of Lord Ossory) "I would not, father—no, I would not part with my dead mother for any living mother in Europe! Let us think what she was in herself, what she has been to us and the world, and what she now is—and could we consent to exchange her for any one?"

One female friend who, with her husband, lives to weep with me afresh; and some of my brethren, to whom I shall never cease to feel my obligations for their long friendship and unwearied kindness; came from afar to weep

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with us, and by sharing our sorrows, to lessen them, on that occasion. One of these was Mr. (now Dr.) Philip, then of Aberdeen, at present, of Cape Town in Africa; whom I mention particularly, as his coming was of great importance to my dear William's subsequent comfort. It had ever been our intention that he should spend four years at the University of Aberdeen, and board with our friend Philip. But, in consequence of *his* intended removal, he strongly recommended Glasgow. Our great concern was, to procure a situation in a family of respectability and intelligence, where my son might feel himself at home, and be happy. Mr. P. thought that Dr. Wardlaw, would possibly, to oblige us both, take him under his roof. He wrote a most favourable account of my child; and Dr. W. consented to receive him. This I shall ever esteem as one of the happiest circumstances of my life. It placed my dearest treasure, where, as far as depended upon human wisdom and kindness, all was safe. It gave to my son, and eventually to myself, a friend, whom I hope I shall ever have the

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privilege of calling such; and from whom William received, to the end of his brief life, the kindness of a father. Both Dr. and Mrs. Wardlaw, by their conduct towards him, have laid me under everlasting obligations.

Our summer passed away as comfortably as, under our circumstances, it could be expected to pass. A large portion of it was taken up in attention to our poor invalid, whose constitution had received an incurable shock. She was, however, able to accompany us in September, to London, whither we went for the purpose of taking a passage to Aberdeen, on a visit to our friend before his departure to Africa. Our residence, for about a forthight, in that metropolis of the north of Scotland, was rendered more than comfortable, by the kindness of Mr. and Mrs. Philip, and the polite and friendly attentions of some among the professors of both colleges, and several of the established ministers of the town. In that part of the United Kingdom, there were none of those painful associations

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which, in moving among our friends in England, were ever presenting themselves; and impairing, where they did not absolutely destroy, our pleasures. We could visit no friend *here*, who did not know her whom we loved and for whom we mourned—no friend, whom we had not seen in company with her. *There* all was new; and it was the first place that fairly restored William and me to any thing like our accustomed cheerfulness.

In the city of Aberdeen, we were exceedingly pleased with an introduction to a young gentleman of uncommon promise; of whom we had heard much; but whose modesty and learning surpassed our expectation. He was the only child of Dr. Ross, like myself, a widower, and "whose life," like my own, "was bound up in the life of his son." This lovely youth was about four years older than William. But their congenial dispositions and pursuits led me to hope that an acquaintance begun under his father's hospitable roof might be renewed in my own house; and at length matured into a friendship dissoluble only by death.

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He had promised to visit Poole in the next Spring, on his way into Devonshire, whither he was going on a visit to a relation. The illness of his honoured father prevented his coming to the south, and the acquaintanceship ceased. This surprising young man, who bid fair to rank, as an oriental and general scholar, with Sir W. Jones, took a journey, in 1820, to the continent of Europe, for the purpose, I understand, of examining some manuscripts in foreign public libraries; and, after passing several months there, returned in health to England; but on his journey from Dover to London, was overturned in the coach, and received an injury which, after causing him to drag out with difficulty a precarious existence through the winter, consigned him to a grave, which he entered with christian peace and hope, in the spring of 1821. Both William and I were greatly affected on hearing of his death; felt deeply for the afflicted father; but rejoiced to hear that he bore the dreadful stroke with the fortitude and resignation becoming a servant of God. I can now more tenderly sympathise with Dr. Ross than ever. We both grieve

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only for ourselves. Our beloved and eminent children are only taken from danger and unavoidable sorrow, to a nobler, holier, and happier state of being. It were impossible that parents in our circumstances should not have indulged high expectations of benefit to the world, and happiness to ourselves, from children so endowed with all that was solid and brilliant in talents, and sweet in disposition; and blessed too with an influence from above, disposing them to consecrate all to the honour and glory of God. But God has taught us that their stay on earth is not necessary to themselves, to us, to the world, or to His cause. "'Tis," says the great John Howe, "a piece of divine Royalty and Magnificence, that when he hath prepared and polished such an *utensil*, so as to be capable of great service, He can lay it by without loss."

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We were accompanied to Glasgow by an affectionate relative, Mr. Coombs, of Ludgate-street, London, who chose the season of our journey to execute a purpose he had long formed, of visiting Scotland. He added, then, as on many other occasions, to our happiness: nor will he, I am certain, feel hurt to see his name recorded with gratitude in the Memoirs of William Friend Durant. We were received most politely by Dr. and Mrs. Wardlaw, who were destined to become the kindest friends of my beloved son; to be the sources of a large share of his comfort in life; his affectionate attendants at the bed of his death—and who now write, "Our eyes and our hearts fill, when we think and speak of him." After spending a week together in that city, we left him. He and I slept in the same room the night preceding my departure. We prayed together, hand in hand, before we retired to rest, and after we had risen early on the morning. His conversation was manly and christian; but he breathed a warmer affection towards me, and expressed a more unbounded

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confidence in me than he had ever uttered before. At six in the morning our coach was to depart. In order to secure a good place, his cousin and I ascended a few minutes before the time; and he accompanied us for the purpose of riding out a couple of miles. The carriage, however, became crowded with passengers, and he was obliged to descend. I shall never forget the tender and agonizing look of that moment. He stood gazing at us for a few seconds; but presently I had lost him; and conjecturing the cause of his disappearance, I sighed—perhaps wept—with him. I then thought, and afterwards found from himself, that he was unable to bear the sight of my departure. I commended him afresh to the guardian care of our Heavenly Father; and felt no slight alleviation of my sorrow at parting, from the thought that God had provided for him such a friend as the gentleman in whose house he was to reside—and under whose roof he was, alas! destined to breathe his last!

At College, a perfectly new world opened before him. To literature, science, and intel-

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ligent companions, he was no stranger. But he was, in effect, an only child; had mixed with no children in his studies; and had never, till that time, received five lessons, except in arithmetic, from any teachers but his father and mother. He knew not a single individual in the University. So entire a change in his habits—formed as he was, too, for affection—considerably lowered his spirits; and his first letters were tinged with a gloom that threw, for a season, no slight degree of shade over my own mind. He found nothing, as he expressed it, to which his heart could cling. He could not, however, be long a stranger; and when known, he could not be long without admirers and friends. The professors and his class-fellows soon discovered his rare talents, his various attainments, and his indefatigable industry.* To Mr. Walker, professor

* His industry *might* have cost him his life, during the first session. He was accustomed, sometimes not less than two or three nights in the week, to throw himself upon his bed in his college gown, in order that he might lose no time in dressing and undressing. I found this out accidentally; but he promised, at my earnest request, not to be guilty of so great an imprudence in future. And after I had received his promise, I was satisfied. Could the first literary honors

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of Humanity, he was indebted for the most marked and polite attentions; and that gentleman often expressed the high opinion he entertained of his abilities. In *his* class my dear boy gained the highest literary distinctions which his standing at College permitted. Though he had, before the last Session, left Mr. Walker's class, that learned professor pronounced upon him, at his death, a eulogium, the most gratifying to the heart of a fond and disconsolate father. He entered, at the same time, into the Greek class: but Professor Young, one of the profoundest, most ingenious, and acute philologists of his age, went his last long journey before him; or he would probably, as spontaneously and conscientiously have borne his testimony to the excellence of his pupil's character and conduct; though it is admitted he had not made such advances in Greek as in the Latin language.

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of Europe have been gained by a breach of his word, I was sure that it would not have been broken. When he had once pledged himself to any thing, I never reminded him, even by an inuendo, of his engagement. *I* should have felt it to have been indelicate; *he* would have felt it as a reflection on his integrity: and our confidence was mutual.

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As soon as I returned to the South, we commenced a regular correspondence, which never varied a day from that time till the illness which terminated in his death. He had not written ten letters before in his life; yet his correspondence bore all the marks of a disciplined writer, ease, elegance, vivacity, and simplicity. Most of them referred to his every day engagements, and were thrown off in the hurry of the moment. He says, in letters written at different times during the session, "I never feel more disposed to write to you, than just after I have received one of your epistles, when my heart and my imagination are, if possible, still warmer than usual; so that I can bring myself into contact, as it were, with you; and fling forth upon you the first, the best, the genuine offspring of my warmest, strongest, and most unshackled feelings. At other times, I *like* to write, but just now I *cannot help* it, any more than I could help going to see you, if I knew that you were in the next room. * * * † My feelings on the

† Occasional *breaks* in this and some of the following letters, are rendered unavoidable, from the manner in which they were composed. Catching a few minutes, now and then,

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receipt of every letter from you, are peculiarly pleasant; as I can look on each of them not only as a proof of your welfare, or a pledge of your affection, but as a mark by which to measure my approaches to the centre of attraction. Still I have nought to blame in my present situation. I *have* enjoyed, and *do* enjoy, from my good host and hostess, all the attention that kind politeness can dictate; and on your part, I receive *more than all* that the warmest attachment can *expect* from the most enlarged affection. Add to this, my unremitted health, and unwearied strength; and oh! what have I not to be thankful for to the Author of every good and perfect gift. * * *

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he would write on subjects just as they occurred at the moment—and grammar, philosophy, politics, religion, and the news of our little circle became intermixed. It was, therefore, impossible to present that coherence of thought which would have existed in letters written at a single sitting. And where, as in the present instance, extracts are made from different letters; or where the parts were dislocated by the introduction of some extraneous matters, the *hiatus* is left in order to indicate the circumstance. This note is appended to the second edition, lest it might be supposed that "more is meant than meets the eye." One or two cases occur, for which a different reason will necessarily be assigned. These may be fairly left to the sagacity of the reader.

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I can assure you, I needed no '*Write as usual,*' with a long dash to induce me to address *you*. Selfishness, if no better motive operated, would induce me to have recourse to the pleasure of writing to you. You know all the delight of receiving letters; but you can hardly imagine how delightful it is to me —in the total want here of every thing like what may be called, the *intimacy of the heart*— to pour out my thoughts, my feelings, my whole soul, every fortnight, *pell-mell*, without order, ornament, or periphrasis, to you who, I believe, so tenderly love me; and who, *I know*, are so tenderly beloved by me."

I shall present but a few extracts from the correspondence of that Winter.

Glasgow, November 12, 1818.

My very dear Father,

That I may not drive myself into a corner, I will begin with those things, which I may otherwise defer, and possibly forget. Yet after having written this sentence, I almost repent of it; for as I like to place every thing in its own order, I find, on reflection, that I ought to defer all these things to that

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part of the sheet I owe to my aunt. Your saying I had not remembered to mention your letter from Birmingham, startled *me*, as much as the fact which authorised the assertion could have astonished *you*: nor can I to this moment imagine how I could have forgotten to mention an event (or rather the news it contained) which called so loudly for gratitude to God, and which produced delightful, and, I hope, thankful emotions.

For my aunt I reserve the narration of domestic occurrences; and to you I will give an account of my progress at College. Mr. Walker is getting acquainted with me in the class. I am frequently called up, and he seems to have some confidence in me: but the most remarkable event since my last, is, my having *breakfasted with the professor*. Mr. Young is still on the grammar. We begin to read Anacreon to-morrow. I have had no opportunities in that class; and if I had, I should not have been fully prepared, I fear, to improve them. However, I have met with no signal defeat; and victory must be gained by perseverance, or not at all. The worst part

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of my situation is, that I am thoroughly *companionless*. I can have no companion but a class-fellow,* because it would not be easy to meet another so frequently, and so certainly, at leisure-hours to both. I should very much like a sodality, pursuing the same studies, and with a slight difference of attainment. This, however, I have no reason even to hope. I know few things that would be more useful to literary progress than such an association; but 'tis surely best to dash Utopian visions from one—make the best of the present—and forget the past and the possible. As you dislike cross-writing, and as answers to my aunt's queries will take up a good deal of room, I must at once say, *Vale*.

My very dear Aunt,

You are right in supposing me not insensible of my father's kindness. I know that whatever the fruit may be, I owe it, under God, to his culture; and I only wish the

* In this, however, he afterwards found himself agreeably mistaken.

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ground were more productive. In your low spirits on your return, I can sympathise with you. There is, however, the consideration, that the same stroke which emptied an house on earth, filled a throne in heaven. This, surely, should operate, with great strength, in moderating our grief. * * * I hope my dear aunt does not injure herself by her exertions for her adopted family;* she never was accustomed to such labors: she must remember, however, that *I* have still stronger claims upon her—viz.—to take care of herself for my sake. It is a great comfort to consider her as with one who loves her so tenderly, and attends to her so kindly; but far more consoling to consider her as under the perpetual guardianship of our Heavenly Father, whose love neither life, nor death itself can impair; but which must be brightening while it developes itself throughout eternity: and were it not so much easier simply to believe, than to feel and to carry our belief into every day's transactions and thoughts, this alone would be sufficient to prevent murmuring, nay, almost even anxiety.

* Two daughters of Dr. Philip.

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Glasgow, November 26, 1818.

My very dear Father and Aunt,*

It would be in vain to comfort a drowning man by the most eloquent and harrowing descriptions of the tortures endured at the stake; and few, when suffering under mental agony, would be satisfied with a philosophical disquisition, to prove that bodily pain is still more to be dreaded than distress of mind. In circumstances so peculiar, topics of consolation, if they occur at all, resemble a desert scene, presenting itself where the traveller had been taught to expect the luxuriance of oriental verdure, illuminated by the brilliancy of an Italian sky. Hence it is, that philosophy has always been proposing remedies, which mankind have been ready to applaud, without ever being able to apply them; and, like the manœuvres of young soldiers, which, at the first cannon they hear, or the first death they witness, are entirely driven

* He always from this time addressed us jointly.

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from their minds—so, by the first storm of affliction, are all the remedies of philosophy, and all the pride of stoicism forgotten; either because the rapid advance of the enemy leaves us no time for the collection of our armour offensive and defensive; or that the languor his terrible approach produces, renders all our endeavours, *in themselves*, as feeble as their *event* is unsuccessful. But there is a state of feeling,—a kind of fluctuation between pain and pleasure—when agony, indeed, is not admitted, nor delight always excluded—but when the heart, though not seared, is uncomfortable, for want of an outlet;—when the affections, though not harrowed, are galled;—and when, without any thing, or without much that is disagreeable in external circumstances, there is an undefined something that is distressing, or, at least, is a kind of discomfort—where, in other circumstances, nothing would be seen but hilarity and joy. Every feeling of this description—call it wretchedness, *ennui*, or what you will—arises, in my opinion, from discontent with oneself, and dislike of one's own company—not *that* do I intend, which is

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at once the offspring and the nurse of crime, but rather what may be produced under almost any circumstances, and by very many occurrences, which have filled the mind with images 'tis not comfortable to recur to, and which yet *force* themselves on our solitary or unoccupied attention.

It is in such a state of mind that consolation of every sort is most valuable: as a ship on a dangerous coast, during a violent storm, may not find the pilot's art of any avail; although, should the tempest abate, and a moderately brisk gale succeed it, his aid will be peremptorily required. My own mind is not unfrequently visited with moods like those I have been describing; and though I never give way to grief, I cannot always defend myself from uneasiness. In such cases, I have no refuge from myself except I fly to my studies, which are daily thickening upon me: and, although I might, without disgrace, glide through the College, (or, at least, these classes) perfectly at my ease; yet both my real interests, and my present inclinations, prompt me to take

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upon myself some of that labor which is so liberally distributed to those who are willing μετα πρωτοισι πονειν.

But I am too querulous, and my aunt will no longer give me the praise of "making the best of things." I will, therefore, alter a strain into which I was led by the folly of attempting to analyse what was scarce worth mentioning; but I must needs catch a little nicety of division, &c. from Professor Young. Mr. Walker remarked, when I breakfasted with him, that he thought of Lord Byron, as a poet, just as he should of a successful and powerful painter, who yet was unable to produce any thing of merit, without introducing, in one part of the canvas or another, the entrails of a wounded man. To follow out the same metaphor,—I seem (not that I pretend to *Byronian* fire) to be attempting your amusement and pleasure by the accurate delineation of a sore finger! I can only say, that I possess very many mercies, and so many more than I can deserve, that to complain of my lot would be as ungrateful to *their* Author, as it

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would be distressing to *you*, the *channels* through which they have generally *flowed to me*.

Since my last, I have become acquainted with a student of very respectable connections, considerable information and classical learning; and, as far as I have been able to discover, of very good principles; although I question whether he has much of the *social spring*, the *vis vivida* of companionship. *I* had heard of *him*, and I suppose *he* had heard of *me*. After reconnoitring for some days, we just spoke to each other, because we had nobody else to speak to; so that if this juxtaposition does not produce very close cohesion, yet the acquaintance can hardly be injurious, and may be agreeable and instructive.

Glasgow, January 7, 1819. (*The day he was sixteen.*)

Your letter to-day afforded me great and unmingled pleasure; and, I hope, inspired me with thankfulness for the mercies

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I experience through you. I have a good deal to communicate; and therefore begin my letter to-day, being a holyday. I have, nevertheless, plenty to do; but my time is not so much cut up as when the classes meet, and prevent my doing any thing before three, or much before five o'clock. I dare say I took too much for granted, and so talked an unintelligible language in my last; I will, therefore, describe the whole process of the examination.

. . . . . .

The College Library is rather a fine room, you know. At the end, towards the chimney, is placed a table with seats for professors at one end, and a finely carved oaken chair, (presented, I think, by James IV. and requiring three or four men of these degenerate days to lug it about) at the other. It has a black marble bottom, which has, time immemorial, stained the (literally) *groaning* weight of students—probably, Knox and the great Buchanan, among the rest. It is surmounted by an hour-glass turning on a pivot, and surrounded with laurel. Old John Machlachlan

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stands behind, watch in hand, calling out, every five minutes, "*Ad alium, Domine,*" a warning voice given for form's sake, and never attended to by the examining professor.

Every person on entering a new class, is supposed to be acquainted with the science, &c. he has left behind him. Now as I rank among the GRÆCI, I *should* be acquainted with LATIN. My knowledge is to be proved by an examination conducted by the professor I am supposed to have left. But the general examination is necessarily cursory and superficial.—Prizes then are proposed—five for the Latin, and one or two for the Greek profession; and the examination of the competitors is comparatively strict and long. This, therefore, rendered my profession so tremendous. The Humanity professor will not judge himself. We (the competitors) chose our own mode of trial. Fifteen *judices* were elected by those, *not* competing, who profess this year. These took their seats close to the table aforesaid, noted down every mistake and will give judgment accordingly.

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The common professions are attended by the examinator and the professor to whose class you are going. Ours was, on the contrary, honored by the attendance of Professors Walker, Young, Jardine, Mylne, Mickleham, and Principal Taylor. Imagine me seated in the chair, my hand trembling, while I was reading aloud my own profession; then unable to find the books I was asked for, and in the utmost state of perturbation. When the examination began, I felt myself, however, on solid ground; and Mr. Walker's kind manner quite re-assured me. I was examined in *four authors*, out of *thirty-nine* which I professed. In Persius, I was slightly embarrassed; not that I did not understand him, so much as from the difficulty of finding English words exactly corresponding to the Latin. However, I did not stop. I only wonder *I got on at all.* You may form some notion of the excitement, when I say, that the whole time occupied by my examination, did not appear to me more than two minutes; and even now, 'tis only the evidence of the spectators, &c. that convinces me to the contrary.—It may be ego-

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tistic, yet as I know it will gratify you, I cannot help mentioning, that a few days ago, Mr. Walker, who has all along been politely kind and attentive, was pleased privately to congratulate me on the appearance I had made; assuring me, that the sentiments the Principal had expressed on the subject, were in perfect accordance with his own.

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DURING this session, he indulged a little in poetic composition. He presented to Mr. Walker many—and some of them spirited—translations of Horace; to these he refers in several of his letters. He began, but, in consequence of many other pressing engagements, he left unfinished, a prize *Carmen elegiacum ad mortem Reginæ.* In addition to the first prize at the Black Stone examination, he gained another by translating *De Senectute* into English, and re-translating it, abridged, into his own Latin. To this, he added copious notes, in English and in Latin, "ON THE OPINIONS ON THE ANCIENTS CONCERNING THE STATE AFTER DEATH." I have read it; and it certainly displays, for a boy of sixteen, uncommon research and acumen. This additional part was a perfect Voluntary,* and his kind professor announced in the class that it was a

* A *college word*, not, perhaps, strictly classical. A VOLUNTARY is a musical term; but the reader will instantly perceive that it is used in these memoirs to denote an essay given in by the sudent *voluntarily*; and not as an *enjoined* exercise.

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manly attempt. He gained also the first prize, among those of his standing, for "eminent talents, industry, and exemplary behaviour during the session," in the Latin; and a very respectable one for the same excellencies in the Greek class. I find, among his papers of that Winter, an ingenious but unfinished piece in prose, attempting "to unfold the principle of Lord Byron's poetry,"—poetry, with which every person of taste must be enraptured—over which every person of humanity, whether he considers the noble author or the public, must weep—and much of which every christian moralist must execrate. While at College, he read Buchanan's beautiful and classical translation of the psalms; which, upon the whole, he preferred to every thing, whether ancient or modern, in the Roman language. The THEME OF DAVID gave an elevated character to his poetry, which the exquisite taste of the Scottish bard transfused into his almost native tongue. At this time, he wrote one little piece, in reference to his beloved mother, in the style of Burns's "Land o' the Leal," which I shall here present.

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THE LAND OF THE BLESSED.

Wo and wailing shall be o'er then,
Weeping shall be heard no more then,
Let us quickly, sweetly soar, then
To the land of the Blessed.
No eye shall ever shed a tear there,
None shall feel or grief or fear there,
Every face a smile shall wear there
In the land of the Blessed.

They, whose wounded, bleeding heart here,
Learned how hard it was to part here,
But hoped, amidst the sharpest smart here,
For the land of the Blessed;
They have met where zephyrs blow, where
Streams of life immortal flow, where
Those they lost, they'll love and know where
Is the land of the Blessed.

Finest radiance smiling round them,
Still increasing joy hath found them,
Ever since death's angel crown'd them
For the land of the Blessed.
Wo and wailing shall be o'er then,
Weeping shall be known no more then,
Let us quickly, sweetly soar, then,
To the land of the Blessed.

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A parent's decision may naturally be suspected of partiality. The extracts, however, already given, and especially those hereafter to be offered, from William's voluminous papers, will, it is confidently hoped, relieve me, in the opinion of candid and competent judges, from the charge of an extravagant estimate of his powers and attainments. Anxious, however, to stand fair with that public, before whom I have—perhaps, too minutely—exposed my child and myself, I wished for an opportunity of publicly recording the opinions which I know were entertained concerning him by those eminent men who conducted his education at Glasgow; and through Dr. Wardlaw, the application was made to them. Willing to soothe the anguish of a bereaved father's heart, they have, there can be no doubt, said ALL that truth permitted them to say. But their characters vouch for the PERFECT TRUTH of their testimony. I am happy that Professor Walker has enabled me, at this stage of the Memoir, to give *his* sentiments. To that accomplished scholar, the letters of this session often refer, in terms of warm

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affection. I regret exceedingly that a series of untoward circumstances, over which I had no control, prevented my offering to him, in person, while I was at Glasgow, the expression of my gratitude. But I beg him to accept this public declaration of my obligation for a conduct marked with the kindness of a father towards my beloved child—an obligation rendered still greater by the following letter to Dr. Wardlaw:—

My dear Sir,

I HAVE received your note, and thank you for the opportunity it gives me of stating the opinion I was led to form of the late Mr. William Durant, while I had the pleasure of superintending his studies. That opinion, however, was so very high, that I must exercise caution in expressing it, lest, from those who knew him less, I incur the charge of exaggeration, or of allowing my sorrow for his loss to overcharge the picture of him which I cherish in my memory. Even with this danger before me, I can safely say, that his character, taken as a whole, was

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nearly the most perfect of any which the circumstances of my life have led me to contemplate with peculiar interest. In each of his good qualities, considered separately, he may have had superiors; but seldom have I found the assemblage so complete, or so harmoniously balanced. An uncommon portion of natural good sense, rendered his general conduct and demeanor such as I should wish to propose for a model to all my students. When he entered my class, though not quite sixteen, and surrounded with contagious examples of youthful levity, I never found it necessary to check him for a single failure in propriety. Even at times, when the business must, to him, have been irksome and uninteresting, his nice sense of decorum, and the control of his gentlemanly manners, prevented him from offending, even by an unseasonable whisper. To myself, indeed, personally, his behaviour was so filial, that I shall never think of him without feelings approaching to the affection and regret of a parent. His steadiness was the more meritorious, as he had nothing phlegmatic in his constitution. He appeared, on

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the contrary, to have a fair portion of that buoyancy of spirit, which, at his age, is so natural and graceful; but his correctness of judgment, and delicacy of tact pointed out to him, almost intuitively, the seasons when it ought, or ought not to be indulged. I have been both gratified and amused (when I considered the general manliness of his deportment) to see him, in the hours of relaxation, humouring the playfulness of his younger class-mates, and captivating them by the cordiality with which he joined their gambols.

Among our youth of talent, I should place him in the highest class; and I should do so on my own judgment, even though I were unsupported by the attestations, for three successive years, of those fellow-students, who, no doubt, watched him with all the keen perspicacity of ambitious, though candid rivals. There was a singular ripeness in all his faculties, easily distinguishable from transient precocity, as their vigour and solidity were no less remarkable than the forwardness of their growth. On his first examination in my class,

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I perceived his superiority; and I ever after naturally turned to him for the answer of questions in which others had failed. While I observed that there were a few elementary delicacies in the Latin language, to which his attention had not been previously directed, I could not help admiring the facility with which this disadvantage was surmounted, by the promptness of his judgment, and steadiness of his attention. To these helps, however, he did not trust. He instantly felt where he was defective, and his diligence in private, and the skill which directed his studies, were attested by the rapidity with which every defect was supplied; till, at the close of the session, his pre-eminence became so decided, as to draw from his fellow-students the highest prize their suffrages could bestow. The style of his exercises was, like his character, of a manly cast, but that also could occasionally descend to a chaste and engaging liveliness. I recollect, in particular, the comic power which he displayed in sustaining a character in one of the scenes of Plautus, and the delighted attention with which he was heard by his class.

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fellows. In graver tasks, his success was, at least, not inferior; but from his talents and taste, the exertion he was making at the moment, was always apt to be considered as his master-piece. To the acquisition even of minor accomplishments, his attention was alive. Among these was elocution, of his success in which he left an impression on our minds.—Only two or three days before his fatal illness, he was chosen to intimate from the pulpit the election of the Lord Rector; and few, I believe, who heard him, will be disposed to deny that the *formula* has seldom been pronounced with more graceful distinctness, elegance and dignity. To the excellence of his moral and religious character, you, who had the best opportunity of appreciating it, have borne ample testimony. There was, however, something about him—certain appearances, more easily interpreted than expressed, which, even with my inferior means of judging, and without your satisfactory attestation, would have led me to infer the purity of his conduct, and the soundness of his principles. The instance you give of his invincible and unequivocating

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adherence to truth, in resisting the opportunity he enjoyed, of adding some improvements to a prize exercise, I read with peculiar interest; as it was in my class the circumstance took place, which, in every particular, was precisely as you have stated it.

I have now, my dear Sir, endeavoured, though imperfectly, to convey to you the impression which was made upon my mind by this amiable and learned youth: and I shall only add, that his death has bereaved me of a friend and pupil for whom I felt a warm affection, and who gave me cause to flatter myself with a belief of its return; and the University of an *Alumnus*, who, for his standing, was not inferior in accomplishment and worth to any whom it has ever had the honor to rear.

I am,

My dear Sir,

Your's, very respectfully,

JOSIAH WALKER.

College, 29th February, 1832.

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His return in May, 1819, though longed for as parents alone, and widowed parents of such children, can feel, happened to be about the anniversary of his dear mother's death. I have never, on any other occasion, experienced so strange a conflict of pleasure and pain. When reading, as usual, the scriptures before family-prayer, on the morning after his return, I saw him opposite me, sitting hand in hand with his aunt, precisely as he had for years sat with her who was now no more, my bursting heart could no longer repress its emotion,—my voice was choked—my sobs became audible—and, ere we could proceed—we—servants and all—gave vent to our tears. His aunt still required his affectionate attentions; her health was no better; and soon after his return, she was seized with a violent illness, which confined her to her bed for some weeks.

During the voyage from Leith to London, he formed his plan of summer study: and his

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decision of character, so far as the result depended on him, ensured its accomplishment. He determined TO COMPOSE DAILY IN LATIN, making Cicero* his model—THRICE OR FOUR TIMES A WEEK TO READ GREEK, BESIDES A CHAPTER, AT LEAST, EVERY DAY, IN THE GREEK TESTAMENT—TO MAKE A TRANSLATION OF THE TRINUMMUS OF PLAUTUS, (which gained a prize)—and, which was his *magnum opus*—TO COMPOSE AN ESSAY ON THE TRIBUNICIAL POWER AMONG THE ROMANS, (which gained the first prize.) He never skimmed the surface of any subject; and this essay, which would make a respectable volume, displayed great research and uncommon discrimination.

* He did not confine himself to words or phrases found in Cicero; for he deemed other authors to be of equal authority; but he was charmed with that great man's *style*. It must, however, be admitted, that Cicero, from the extent of his erudition, from the copiousness of his language, and from the variety of his subjects, has furnished almost a complete vocabulary. At the suggestion of our friend, Mr. Bullar, of Southampton, I procured an invaluable work (in three volumes, published 1820, by Priestly) "*Lexicon Ciceronianum Marii Nizolii—Juxta editionem Jacobi Facciolati*. During this summer, William went through one of Crombie's volumes on Latin Synonimes.

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He formed, almost in an instant, the plan of his work; and, that he might treat it as he ought, he read *Hallam's Middle Ages*,—a dry, but profound work, which enters deeply into the question of governments—*Kennet's Antiquities*—*Bankes's Civil and Constitutional History of Rome*—*Hookes's Roman History*—the *Latin writers*, who had referred to the subject—and, above all, LIVY. His method with the last author, was—to read, in the original, one volume every week, for the first seven weeks * after his return, making, as he proceeded, the necessary references and extracts for his work. He effected this, chiefly by the bed-side of the beloved sufferer. He disturbed her not—was ready to converse with her whenever she pleased—and to assist her, or call for assistance, whenever she needed it. In this work, he did not receive the slightest assistance; and had I offered him my aid, he would have refused it. He was most scrupulous never to present a line that was not entirely his own. A striking instance of his

* My copy is Tonson and Watts's edition of 1749, in seven volumes.

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honour in this respect was given during this or the following summer, in a translation of the *Somnium Scipionis*. I compared it with the original; and found that, owing to the obscurity of the thing itself, and *especially owing to his ignorance of the terms of music*, he had given no very intelligible view of that odd passage respecting the spheres, which begins "*Nonne aspicis, quæ in templa veneris? novem tibi orbibus*," &c. Understanding myself a little—though very little—of music, I wrote out a translation of that part, and presented it to him. He smiled, and said, "That is better than mine—but I must send it in with all its imperfections on its head: it is understood to be, throughout, *my* translation."—I loved and venerated him the more for his perfect honesty. It gained no prize: that fell to the lot, I think, of Mr. Sandford, son of the Bishop of Edinburgh, and brother of the present Greek professor at Glasgow.

He also wrote, in a burlesque style, a very humorous *Voluntary*, descriptive of college life, which displayed considerable talent for

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that kind of composition. It neither gained, nor was intended to gain, a prize; but was thrown in as a work of supererogation; either to make the professor smile, or to convince him that he had not only been far from idle, but intensely active during his five months' vacation. In the course of the summer, as he was about to enter the logic class, we read Watts's Logic, D. Stewart's Elements, &c. In a part of this we were accompanied by a young French gentleman, Mr. Hine, then visiting at our house; who was to become his class-fellow at College; who there ranked among his dearest friends; and who expressed *his* friendship towards us by assiduous attentions at my son's dying bed, and by mingling his tears with mine at his grave.

The Essay on the Tribunicial power is much too long for insertion in these memoirs. It consists of—*An* INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.—CHAPTER II. *which contains preliminary considerations on Roman Government, from the foundation of the city, to the year (U. C.)* 260. —CHAPTER III. *Reaches from the year* 260, *to*

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the year 349, *when pay was first given to the soldiers.*—CHAPTER IV. *Reaches from the year* 349, *to the tribunate of T. Gracchus, in the year* 619.—CHAPTER V. *Extending from the year* 619, *to the breaking out of the Civil War in* 703.—CHAPTER VI. *Considers,—Was the tribunal power injurious or beneficial to the state?*

The copy in my possession is less perfect than that which was given in at College: for he improved it, and, in some slight degree, altered the arrangement, after his arrival at Glasgow, and before the prescribed season for its delivery to the Professor. As the first and last chapters are not long, I will give them as specimens of his style at a little more than sixteen years of age.

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ESSAY ON THE TRIBUNICIAL POWER.

INTRODUCTORY.

CHAP. I.

"ETERNAL ROME!"—"ETERNAL!!"—"And this is little man's eternity!" might the moralist exclaim, were he disposed to moralize amid her nodding arches, her roofless temples, her broken columns, her mouldering porticoes, her ruined theatres, her desecrated shrines! Yet, if he were inclined to take a more encouraging, and, perhaps, a less misanthropic view of human labour, genius and glory, he might find something to raise his spirits, should he happen to remember Horace's triumphant prophecy, so certainly fulfilled, and still in the course of fulfilment,

> Non omnis moriar, multaque pars mei
> Vitabit Libitinam!

Such an observer might feel almost proud

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of our common nature, should he turn to contemplate the breathing, burning, everliving thoughts, that glow in the pages of a Virgil; or should he give himself up to the magic charm which the descriptions of a Livy still throw round the ruins of what once was Rome—ruins, where every object meeting the eye proclaims the instability of empires, the fluctuations of human affairs, and the transitory nature of earthly splendor; while it reminds the observer, that in the closet of some laborious and, perhaps, neglected recluse, monuments were reared, which, after having withstood the shock of time, and survived the wreck of ages, still continue to bestow on the ruins of palaces and the vestiges of ancient grandeur, an intense, although melancholy interest, that conquerors and senates, heroes and emperors, would never have been able to confer.

Yet it is precisely all this fine feeling and classic prepossession, of which the diligent inquirer into the infancy of Rome must strip himself: it is especially against this enthu-

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siasm, against these associations, that he finds it necessary to be on his guard.

We must be content to give up every theory, however beautiful,—every, however plausible, conjecture, which would induce us, among the military barbarians of infant Rome, to look for refined policy, philosophical legislation, or measures of resistance to the arbitrary power of the crown or aristocracy, sufficiently enlightened to call for our praise, or so rational as to deserve commendation.

Even after the expulsion of the kings, and after a form of government had been established, more conformable to the wishes, opinions or prejudices of the aristocratic leaders, who headed the revolution, we ought to be extremely careful how we credit all the splendid and imposing accounts which historians relate about the popular assemblies, or infant senate. It will be confessed that the earlier secessions have much more the appearance of a military mutiny than of a rational plan, laid by wise politicians, and executed by enlightened free-

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men; while the tumults of the campus and the seditions of the forum, stript of their imposing names, are easily resolvable into the dignity of a Spa-fields mob, or the calm and judicious determinations of a Westminster election.

The task of discussing the questions about the claims to authenticity, possessed by early Roman history, falls as little within the scope of the present essay, as it does within the capacities of the writer. It is sufficient for our purpose to assume, what all parties are, we suppose, sufficiently ready to admit, that the leading facts of ancient story are as correct as its minuter details may be suspicious; that original documents existed; and, that wherever they did exist, the ancient historians were sufficiently willing to avail themselves of their assistance; that original documents were nevertheless scanty, meagre, corrupted; and that where original information failed, the eloquence and ingenuity of the Augustan age were employed to supply the deficiency; that it was sometimes easy, and generally possible,

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to distinguish spurious authorities from genuine,—truth from falsehood,—certainty from conjecture;—and that wherever such a possibility existed, neither acumen was wanting to penetrate the subject, nor intellect to illume it; that it was, nevertheless, sometimes an Herculean labour to separate the precious from the vile, and to draw a line between what was possible and what was incredible; between what was probable and what was certain; and that, where the difficulty appeared insurmountable, the historian, finding himself loosened from the strict trammels of fact, sometimes lanched into the shoreless sea of conjecture; suffered himself to be seduced by the temptation of delighting his readers at the expense of historical accuracy; determined to interest, although unable to satisfy; and set himself to sway the heart, when he found it difficult or impossible to guide the judgment, or enlighten the understanding.

And yet, in granting all this, we have, in fact, conceded nothing more than almost

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every man, uninfluenced by party feeling, antiquarian predilection, or violent nationality, would be prepared to admit as to each of the writers who have touched on the remoter history of our own island.

After all the acuteness, philosophy, and conjecture which have been spent on the proof, or on the illustration, of our own legal and constitutional antiquities, few, perhaps, who are not devoted to the support of a system, will assert, that either our acquaintance with the code of each several state, which went to compose the Heptarchy, or our knowledge of the rights and privileges inherent in the Wittenagemote, extends much farther than does our information about the institutions of Romulus, or the legislation and classification contrived and effected by Servius.

But while few things are less necessary, and scarcely any thing of the kind more presumptuous, than at once to refuse credit to all the accounts given by Roman historians concerning their own antiquities; and fearlessly

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to class the elegant narrations of a Livy with the improbable fictions of Gothic chroniclers, and monkish historians; yet it might argue, not indeed equal arrogance, but at least a sufficiently blind veneration for authority, even when supported only by the magic of a name, should we receive, without examination, all the reports of ancient writers; some few of whose sources of information we ourselves possess; while to others of their authorities the very writers in question have introduced us so as to put it in our power to conjecture, at least, the strength of the foundation on which the whole superstructure rests.

After all the superiority which not only the intrinsic merit of the Greek and Roman authors, but also the prejudices of our earlier years, may incline us to attribute to the ancients; yet every man, who is an enlightened worshipper, rather than a bigotted devotee, will be ready to admit, without either reservation or reluctance, that there are some laurels of literary glory, which must be resigned to the moderns; and that there exist extensive

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tracts in the territories of both science and philosophy, where no victories were won, no conquests achieved by the acuteness of Greece, or by Roman research and erudition; but which, nevertheless, have been, in later ages, conquered, cultivated, and, (to keep up the allusion) subjected to a kind of agrarian division; by which, every man, who has any connection at all with the republic of letters, has obtained, in that particular part of her dominions, larger possessions than any, with the very existence of which those who formerly filled her highest offices, or had obtained admission to her most hidden treasures, were in the slightest degree acquainted.

Such an admission will by no means diminish the reverence with which we are accustomed to regard the brilliant thoughts, the just and noble sentiments, the knowledge of human principles and feelings, in which consists the true and the only imperishable glory of the classical writers: we shall, perhaps, be induced to look upon their works with the feelings in which we may suppose a skilful

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architect to indulge, while contemplating the fragments of some magnificent, but ancient ruin. No man would be less disposed than he to admit a single sentiment of indifference; or be less likely to experience a single feeling not partaking even of enthusiasm; and yet there would surely be no proof of his not having a proper feeling for the sublime and beautiful, if, while entranced in those delightful, yet melancholy reflections, with which such scenes always inspire a man of taste, he should occasionally perceive a deficiency, which modern inventions would have enabled the original artist to supply, or a fault which modern science would have taught him to correct.

Is it not, then, allowable to class among modern improvements, that attention which has been paid by our historians, as well as by professional men, to the philosophy of history in general, and especially of legal history? Here there is some danger perhaps of being misunderstood. We are, I should apprehend, by no means warranted to assert that the Roman historians are excelled by those of

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modern Europe, in knowledge of character, in truth of sentiment, in force of colouring, in perspicuity of style, in accuracy of delineation. Livy, Sallust, and Tacitus, form an illustrious, —and we may, perhaps, say, an unequalled— triad, although their excellencies were of different kinds. The first may remind us of some beautiful paintings, where, even if a martyrdom be the subject, a distant glory is introduced to throw a tint of magic brilliance over the prospect; while the works of the two other historians resemble, perhaps, the productions of a Fuseli, where, even amid paradisaic scenery, some form of evil is dimly seen threatening to blast and to destroy.

That part of the civilised world which was known to Roman historians, consisted of Greece, Italy and Asia. In these countries, the constitutions then existing were most simple in their first principles; and may all, with ease, be divided into classes, under one or other of which will naturally fall almost every form of government known to the Latin authors: without here entering on a discussion

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(where even a learned writer might chance to be nonplused) concerning the Aboriginal inhabitants of Greece and Italy, it may, with tolerable certainty, be asserted of the former country, that it's civilization came from Asia—the cradle of knowledge; or from Egypt—the nurse of infant science; while not only natural conjecture, but even, I should imagine, remains of the remotest antiquity will induce us even concerning Italy, to arrive at a similar conclusion.

Be this as it may—it does appear, that at a period earlier than any to which very authentic history reaches; Greece, the Grecian settlements in Italy, and (in a certain sense) even the Etruscan confederacy, were divided, and subdivided into a number of little independent kingdoms, or chieftainships; in which the monarch, (and the Lucumones appear to have been monarchs, without the name of king,) acted in the double capacity of judge during peace, and commander or chieftain in time of war. To whatever cause this minute subdivision of territory is attributable, to it,

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probably, we may ascribe the free spirit of the ancients:—every freeman was a soldier, and could resist oppression; no man could learn to esteem a domestic tyrant beyond the efforts, or above the reach, of his vengeance: no man could be brought to feel indifferent to revolutions going on twelve miles distant, perhaps, from the extremest frontier of the empire.

The history of these little states is, of course, pretty uniform:—some ambitious prince ripened authority into power; power into tyranny;—the people murmured, rebelled, and succeeded in establishing a republican form of government;—the republic, after the first struggle was over, became comparatively rich and powerful;—riches and power rendered her corrupt; and her corruption presented her an easy prey to some aspiring and daring spirit, who, without much difficulty, contrived to enslave her. His descendants probably carried tyranny beyond the bounds of human endurance. The republic was restored, and with it nothing of its spirit, except its licence

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and its intrigues. A scene of anarchy ensued, till the republic, wearied with intestine commotions, and exhausted by the contests of jarring factions, sunk under the power of some stronger neighbour; who, in his turn, was doomed to yield to a still more formidable antagonist; till the world, at length, crouched beneath the imperial sceptre, and till all divisions of territory were sunk, all national distinctions absorbed in the ROMAN EMPIRE.

When we consider all this; and, in addition to it, remember that the most splendid æra of Roman literature must be fixed at a period when liberty had just departed; when her pulse had just ceased to beat; and when an imperial patron discouraged, undoubtedly, if he did not entirely extinguish, the "burning grief" which might otherwise have animated the admirers of freedom among the literati of the empire; we shall not wonder if the Roman historians are comparatively silent about the origin of forms, the spirit of which they saw was departed; or if they were rather indifferent in tracing the progress of a constitution

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which had ended in a splendid despotism, that preserved, indeed, shadows which centuries of glory had rendered venerable, while the true principle of vitality was removed, the flame of liberty finally extinguished.

Some, if not all, of these causes operated with equal force on the Greek historians, whose writings convey to us so much information concerning the remoter history of that city which afterwards became the ruler of the world. Neither class of writers were able to refer to any constitution distinguished for the wisdom of its design, the beauty of its outline, or the harmony of its proportions. Despotism, democracy, and oligarchy, with their several modifications of evil, rather than approximations to good, were the only forms of polity with which the ancients were acquainted. There was, then, in the enquiry little to stimulate curiosity,—nothing to reward exertion.

Is it wonderful, that, under such circumstances, they turned with satisfaction to the contemplation of military glory? The laurels

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were yet unfaded on the brow of Rome, her spear was yet unbroken, and she appeared to possess the vigor of youth united to all the claims on universal respect, which antiquity could confer. It required the eye of an observer more penetrating than the mass of mankind, in order to see that the principle of mortality was busily at work within; that the poisonous draught was administered; that her beauty was the hectic flush of disease, and her apparent vigor only that short blaze of life, which sometimes precedes its utter extinction, and which must soon sink, with a rapidity proportioned to the brilliance of its momentary flame!

Thus, then, I have endeavoured to account for the existence of a deficiency which I have perhaps, without good reason, attributed to the classical historians. I have also, in this introductory chapter mentioned my own views concerning the authenticity of Rome's remoter history;—not that I was arrogant enough to conceive my own opinions to be of any importance on so intricate a subject; but merely

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because it was necessary to state principles which must have so considerable a degree of influence over all my succeeding speculations.

The conclusions, which seem naturally to flow from the imperfect statements of this chapter, appear to be, 1st, That while our faith in the accounts given us by Roman historians ought to be progressively complete in proportion as the events they record approach their own times; our opinion of that part of their own history which regards their remotest antiquities, ought to be as far removed, on the one hand, from what I must be allowed to call arrogant scepticism, as it should be, on the other, from implicit or unshaken confidence; 2dly, That the almost exclusive attention paid by ancient historians to military affairs, leaves their civil and (if the term be admissible) constitutional antiquities peculiarly open to modern conjecture and speculation.

While on this subject, I would once more observe, that the discrepancies we find in

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their own accounts of their remoter antiquities, go far to prove that with themselves very much was conjecture; and that of their earlier chronology, much was founded on probabilities or traditions, which are but uncertain guides in so strict a science.

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CHAP. VI.

Considers,—Was the Tribunicial power injurious or beneficial to the state?

THE *history* of the Tribunicial power, while it forms the principal, does not form the exclusive object of the present essay: and in consequence of the form in which the exercise was prescribed, I feel myself bound to enter into a separate discussion of the question on which it is my intention, in this chapter modestly to offer an opinion. But as it is difficult, if not impossible, to rear a firm and consistent superstructure till the inequalities of the surface are planed away; so it would not be easy, were it even at all practicable, to form any well-founded opinion at present, without first endeavouring to remove all those extraneous accretions which, although not belonging to the subject, are so intimately blended with it, that they perplex our inquiries, and increase our labour; or, without striving to do away with the influence of all

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those connected, but unessential circumstances which, unnecessarily distracting our attention, either entirely defeat us in our attempts to ascertain the truth, or at all events lead us, by the most circuitous route, to the attainment of an object, of which they, nevertheless, ultimately suffer us to acquire possession.

The following, then, are the rules on which the subsequent inquiry ought, as far as I can judge, to be conducted:—I. We must in this place forbear indulging in comparisons between the provisions for general and personal freedom, which existed in ancient Rome, and those on which our own country so justly prides herself. I do not pretend to deny that a mental exercise of the kind to which I have referred is, on many occasions, both pleasant and profitable; but any comparisons, such as have been alluded to, would transgress the prescribed limits. For the question is simply this—"Was the Tribunicial power in Rome injurious or beneficial to the state?" And we have, consequently, nothing at present to do with another question, at first apparently si-

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milar, but in reality widely differing from the preceding—" How nearly did this popular institution approach the ideal, or even the attainable, standard of political perfection?"

II. It is improper to attempt to decide on the merits of the office, as a whole, without, in the first place, contemplating it in the several distinct periods of its existence. The question before us, although apparently in itself so general, and, at first view, requiring only a genetal reply; yet can, in fact, be answered only by an examination of particulars, by taking up separate periods, by entering into separate discussions on each of them, and by remaining content with the unenlivened dulness of a patient investigation, without indulging in flashes of eloquence, did we possess it, or in bursts declamation to supply its place.

III. It must be an object in this last stage of the present essay, accurately to distinguish between the faults of the office and those of any particular officer or set of officers; between the violence ascribable to the nature of

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the institution, and that which is attributable to the oppressive measures of the nobility; between effects resulting from the natural elasticity of the spring, and those which were occasioned by its rebounds, when the overweening pride of the aristocracy had compressed it, till further compression was impossible.

On these principles, then, I would first divide the history of Tribunicial Power into three great portions. I. From the year 260, to the year 349. II. From the year 349, to the year 619. III. From the year 619, to the year 703.

Before proceeding, it may not be improper just to remark, that when I take into consideration the question which we are now discussing, I look upon the following as its equivalent: Was the Tribunicial Power productive of more happiness than misery? The object of all political institutions is, I imagine, the happiness of the mass of society; so that our inquiries will not be, What did the Plebeians gain? What did the aristocrats lose?

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Was the progress of Roman conquests facilitated or impeded, quickened or retarded, by tribunicial power?

I. In the first place, then—In considering the events of the first period, with a view thereupon to form our judgment on the question before us, we should remember that, before the year 260, there was *actually* existing no inconsiderable portion of *real* and intolerable oppression. The creation of the tribunicial office did not arise from the desire of realizing a theory; nor was its erection or its subsequent increase the consequence of a vain and arrogant system of sophistry, working on the prejudices of a half enlightened nation of *soi-disants* philosophers.

It was the cry of unmitigated wo; it was the posture of desperate defiance, that alarmed the aristocracy into a grant of privileges, which it was no longer in their power to withhold; and wrung from the patrician partizans concessions which they were no longer able to delay.

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Now, then, this part of the enquiry before us just resolves itself into another question. From the year 260, to the year 349, Did the misery occasioned, and the happiness destroyed, by the exertions of tribunicial power, preponderate over the misery which it prevented, and the happiness of which it was the cause?

It would not be difficult to present, in a short space, all the great injuries effected by the tribunes during the period under review; which injurious proceedings were of serious detriment to the Roman commonwealth. But as the principal evil was occasioned, not by temporary efforts, but by that perpetual tendency to irritation, which the tribunicial power contributed to excite and to keep up; as almost all the more violent attacks on the patricians, as well as the more unwarrantable measures of the tribunes, are attributable to the aristocratic pride and severity of the other party; and as history almost necessarily presents us with the tumultuous efforts of the tribunes, rather than with the constant effects

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of tribunicial interference; I shall turn to the brighter side of the picture, and consider, for a moment, what this magistracy did for the support of popular rights and the promotion of general happiness.

And here, too, I would remark, that we are to appreciate the effects of tribunicial power, not so much by the large concessions which it might occasionally force from the nobility; not by its temporary exertions of extraordinary, and, perhaps, illegal authority; but rather, by the constant progress in liberal notions and feelings; by the uninterrupted advance of the people toward their final object; and by the constant protection afforded to the great body of the commons, by magistrates from among themselves, and of their own appointment.

When we consider the advantages thus obtained for the cause of freedom; the regular code of laws collected and made public; the misery actually remedied; and the unhappiness probably prevented;—I am inclined to think

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that we shall be disposed to excuse the tumults of intemperate zeal, and the occasional insolence of the plebeian magistrates; and we shall be almost prepared to admit the general utility of the plebeian magistracy during the period under review.

I have time, however, only cursorily to notice the argument, without dwelling on it; and it is now necessary to proceed to the second period proposed for consideration.

Soon after the commencement of the second period, (in 349) a series of extraordinary events (in 365) paralysed, for a moment, the power and the spirit of Rome. The cause of the plebeians seems to have received a considerable check, and the division between the high and the low, the great and the insignificant, the rich and the poor commoners gradually became more and more distinct than it had been.

Licinius, however, roused the spirit of the Roman people; and although his favourite

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law was, perhaps, rather injurious to the popular party; yet the admission of plebeians into the consulship (in 389) was at once expedient, equitable, and necessary.

From this æra, the tribuneship became decidedly beneficial to the State. Although this office was gradually losing much of its original and democratic character, still the great plebeian magistrates yet retained sufficient regard for the people, to serve as a kind of barrier against the attempts made upon popular rights by the aristocracy, during the period under review.—All party animosities were, however, for a time, almost entirely suppressed, when the dread of Carthaginian arms awed all the members of the State into union; just as by tight bandages the dislocated limbs of the human frame are all kept in their proper places; whereas, if the pressure were removed, the full force of the disease would probably at once make its appearance.

The aristocracy were not very much inclined to encroach; nor are the tribunes generally

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chargeable with any thing more than a proper degree of vigilance for the interests of their order. Towards the end of this period, however, the tribunes began to display that spirit which so soon afterwards broke out with a violence which injured the commonwealth, but consumed the incendiaries who had brandished the torch of faction.

The state of parties, as it affected the nature and extent of tribunicial power, is not here referred to; because the subject has been treated at length in CHAPTERS IV. and V. of the present essay.

In the third period, at which we are now are arrived;—a period reaching from 619 to 703,—the tribuneship appears to have been a source of unmitigated evils. Insolence, want of subordination, and all the evils peculiarly marking the whole of this period, were now fostered and cherished by the tribunicial power. If any unprincipled or ambitious man wished to accomplish a scheme of villany, to excite a tumult, to undermine the constitution, to

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attain exorbitant power or illegal influence, he had immediate recourse to the assistance of some depraved tribune; who, trusting to the protection his *sacrosanct* office afforded him, soon blew the dying embers of sedition into a bright flame.

Sylla at length demolished the exorbitant power; or, more properly speaking, perhaps, placed boundaries to the unlimited pretensions of the great plebeian magistracy. Every measure taken by this extraordinary man, displays a mind possessed of the acutest penetration, and of almost intuitive discernment; while his procedures frequently bespeak a heart which, had it been left unvitiated by the intoxicating poison of criminal ambition, would have been susceptible of the noblest feelings that can animate the human breast. As different from his opponent, Marius, as any one human being of extraordinary talents can be dissimilar from another; of rare mental endowments; Sylla seemed to live in a region higher than that which is inhabited by the mere ordinary soldier or politician. Above

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the common pursuits of men, and despising the universal idols of mankind, he seemed to snatch the most brilliant honors, and to ascend the highest pinnacle of glory, only that he might show the world his contempt of its most flattering distinctions; without leaving room for the shadow of a suspicion, that his sentiments were the expression of conscious and mortified weakness; or his philosophy the apparent calmness of blasted hope, the affected magnanimity of disappointed ambition. Although the degradation to which he subjected the tribuneship was an almost necessary consequence of the character borne by Sylla, as the professed leader of the aristocratic party; yet I am inclined to believe, that this, like many other measures of his internal administration, was eminently calculated to fix the still undefined constitution, and to confirm the general liberty and happiness of the Roman people; had not the depravation of that people rendered them wholly incapable of enjoying either the one or the other.

But no laws could now stem the torrent of

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private immorality and public crime. The powers of the tribuneship, extensive as in theory they continued to be, were in fact subservient to the will of every master of public opinion or of military force. Illegal measures were thus covered with the semi-transparent veil of pretended constitutional authority. By these means, their deformities were concealed; and, while penetrating minds saw through so imperfect a covering, the populace were as completely deceived by the trick as were the Homeric and Virgilian heroes by those shadowy images of their leaders, that were thrown in among them by deities, who were interested in the event of the contest.

The result of the preceding statements seems to amount to this,—that, from the year 260, to the year 349, the exercise of tribunicial power was upon the whole, beneficial to the state. II. That during the greater part of our second period—viz. from the year 349 to 619—such was the situation of affairs, and such the conduct of the tribunes, that the office is to be considered as in the highest degree a

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national blessing; although, unfortunately, toward the end of this period, there was displayed a little of that factious spirit, which characterized the times immediately succeeding; and which, burst out, with intolerable fury, in 619, where our third period commences. III. That from the year 619, to the year 703, the tribunicial office became, like every other office, a tool of ambition, and an instrument, by means of which the most corrupt designs were carried into execution; while, from the ancient popularity of its authority, it served as a mask for the most unpopular designs.

And now I feel inclined to give way for a moment to the expression of a sentiment, which, in the course of a dry, and I hope, patient investigation, I found it necessary to repress. And after contemplating the clumsy provisions for general liberty which were made by the heroes and sages of antiquity, I must be allowed to turn, with admiring and almost rapturous veneration, to the constitution of our country.

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LONG MAY THAT CONSTITUTION FLOURISH! but if her doom be written in the book of fate;—if, in the revolutions of ages, she be destined to sink; if we *must* anticipate the period when some indignant patriot, or some weeping philanthropist, shall have to exclaim over her mouldered remains, "TROJA FUIT;" if it be reserved for her to expire, *except* in the last great conflagration, when unnumbered systems will be enveloped in the flames of a dying universe; we have our consolation. Other countries have copied after this bright original; and, even her decline will be like the setting of a summer evening sun, which, after having given heat, light and life to our globe, throws around him, even when he is sinking beneath the horizon, a splendid flood of chastened, softened, and widely diffused brilliancy!

And if no other end be answered by the investigation of Rome's legal and constitutional history, the labour of the search will not be fruitless, if it induce us to turn with more delighted admiration, from the discordant ele-

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ments of the Roman constitution, to the contemplation of British liberty; in the composition of which, every hue, so to speak, softly melts into the other; while the whole produces the brilliant yet harmonious effect of rainbow-tints;

"Yet fades not half so swift away;"

and, like the rainbow, our constitution shooting across the thunder-cloud of war, has thrown some brilliance over the darkest scenes, has excited the admiration of foreign nations, and will prove, I hope, to have been an omen of universal felicity, and the forerunner of a brighter day, when the spirit of genuine liberty shall no longer be *confined* within the shores of our Island; but when all nations shall participate in the equal enjoyment of the invaluable privileges which it is her's to bestow!

END OF VOL I.

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